New ambassador sees bright prospects for RP in Iraq

Story on PAGE A2

Summer typhoon threatens to hit Luzon

By Gerald G. Lacuarta

LIKE halo-halo on a hot day, a strong typhoon that threatens to hit Northern Luzon by the weekend might just be the relief needed to offset the searing heat of summer.

Pagasa reported yesterday that a tropical depression spotted near the Caroline

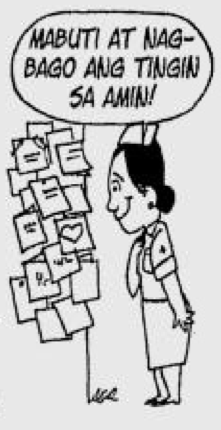
SUMMER/ A4

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

S'poreans say sorry to angels

FROM outcasts to heroes. Singapore's healthcare workers, the multinational frontline troops in the battle against the killer SARS virus, are now being given

S'POREANS/ A14


MABUTI AT NAGBAGO ANG TINGIN SA AMIN!

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph
Wednesday, April 16, 2003 ★★ 50 pages / 5 sections / vol. 18 / no. 129 P15
website: www.inq7.net

SARS hits Pinoy group in Canada

Catholic community has 29 possible cases

FREE VITAMINS
HK & Sing. OFWs
Mula sa OWWA Medicare

ROGER MARGALLO

NO cure yet but a stronger body is the best defense against the deadly SARS. An Owwa employee hands out free vitamins at the Naia.

CANADIAN authorities have identified a cluster of 29 possible SARS cases in Toronto involving members of a closely knit Philippine-based Catholic charismatic group, the Bukas Loob sa Diyos (BLD) Covenant Community.

Three of the possible cases are children.

All 500 members of the sect have been ordered to undergo a 10-day quarantine starting last Monday, but local newspapers reported that infectious disease experts were worried that containment efforts might not work given the sect members' close interaction.

The Winnipeg Sun reported that some members of the group have not complied with instructions to isolate themselves.

Canada's The Globe and Mail quoted an unidentified source as saying, "With a close group like this, it could be analogous to something like an Amoy Gardens."

Amoy Gardens is an apartment complex in Hong Kong where one man is believed to have infected more than 200 residents. A block of the complex had to be closed down and its residents isolated in another place for several days.

The BLD Covenant Community has a largely Filipino membership worldwide. It promotes family unity through activities like prayer meetings and social gatherings.

All 29 BLD members believed to have been infected with SARS had attended the wake of a SARS victim at the Highland Funeral Home last April 3.

Two doctors who treated some of them were also believed to have been infected with SARS.

SARS/ A14

DOH says reported SARS death false alarm

By Armand N. Nocum

HEALTH Secretary Manuel Dayrit last night announced that the woman who died of suspected SARS at a Quezon City hospital was negative of the killer virus.

"We're glad that it turned out to be a false alarm," Dayrit said at a hastily called press conference. He said an autopsy conducted on the body of the 55-year-old patient showed multiple lesions in the liver and lungs indicating cancer, an ailment she reportedly kept secret from her family.

"She had breast cancer and the infection spread onto her lungs and liver, which caused her to succumb to bronchopneumonia. She died of cancer and not of SARS," Dayrit said of the woman who was first admitted to the Far Eastern University Hospital for fever and cough on April 12.

He said the woman was

DOH/ A14

UP doctor gives ultimate lesson in anatomy

By Leila B. Salaverria

WHERE does the soul go when a man departs this life?

Dr. Jorge "Gene" San Juan was sure it didn't remain, not for a second, in the confines of flesh and bones. As a surgeon at the Philippine General Hospital, he handled bodies in varying degrees of proximity to death. As a professor of anatomy at the University of the Philippines College of Medicine, he examined possibly more bodies in their final corporeal state.

From both perspectives, San Juan

UP DOCTOR/ A13

IT'S the blues for this rondalla at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport whose members have been forced to wear masks. SARS can't stop Filipinos from playing music. ROGER MARGALLO

Major combat over; US scales down forces

WASHINGTON—Major combat in Iraq is over now and US commanders are starting to send home aircraft carriers and stealth bombers and fighters, while they adjust their ground forces for a changing mission, senior Pentagon officials said yesterday.

"I would anticipate that the major combat engagements are over because the major Iraqi units on the ground cease to show coherence," said Army Maj. Gen. Stanley McChrystal, vice director of operations of the Joint Staff.

Tikrit, the hometown of deposed Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, was the last place where US forces thought they might find sizeable units of his Special Republican Guard forces, he said. But it fell Monday with only sporadic resistance.

"We will move into a phase where it will be small, albeit sharp fights," said the general.

Victoria Clarke, the Pentagon spokesperson, told reporters not to expect a declaration of victory.

"I think you're going to see us talking for a long time about

MAJOR/ A14

Laguna de Bay cited anew at World Water Forum

By Jerry Esplanada

(First of two parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

SHIGA, Japan—Our very own Laguna de Bay did it again: It has been named one of five models of sustainable lake initiatives by the 23-member Living Lakes international network.

The 90,000-hectare lake shared top honors with Europe's Lake Constance (which is bordered by Germany, Austria and Switzerland), St. Lucia in South Africa, La Nava in Spain and the Columbia River Wetlands in Canada at the just-concluded Third World Water Forum here.

The Philippines' largest inland body of water received a similar citation from the network during its seventh conference last August in Pretoria and Johannesburg, South Africa.

All five winners are members of Living Lakes, established in 1998 by the Germany-based Global Nature Fund (GNF).

And all five are featured in the network's toolkit, which was launched during the forum session. The publication explains how the lake partnerships work in practice and suggests ways for businesses, nongovernment orga-

LAGUNA/ A4

3 Pampanga boys on 8th year as flagellants

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—Flagellation, a Lenten practice of scarring, whipping and making one's back bleed, is certainly no child's play. Boys have, however, adopted the Church-forbidden practice.

In Barangay San Pedro Cutud here—unofficially called the Philippines' Calvary—where crucifixion is real and flagellation is done by groups of men in the village of 10,000 families, three boys are now on their eighth year as flagellants.

They are now 16, 14 and 15 years old. Two of them are brothers.

Their backs bear the healed marks of numerous lacerations from the "devotion" they had practiced since 1996.

Like they did in past *Semana Santas*, they have readied their *burilyos* (bamboo pads fastened to whips made of braided cloths).

Until they came, the bloody penitential rite used to be the ex-

3 PAMPANGA/ A13

A MOSAIC of the seven stations of the cross decorates one side of the Mt. Carmel Church in New Manila, Quezon City. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: The whole country will experience partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.
SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/04/16/03

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

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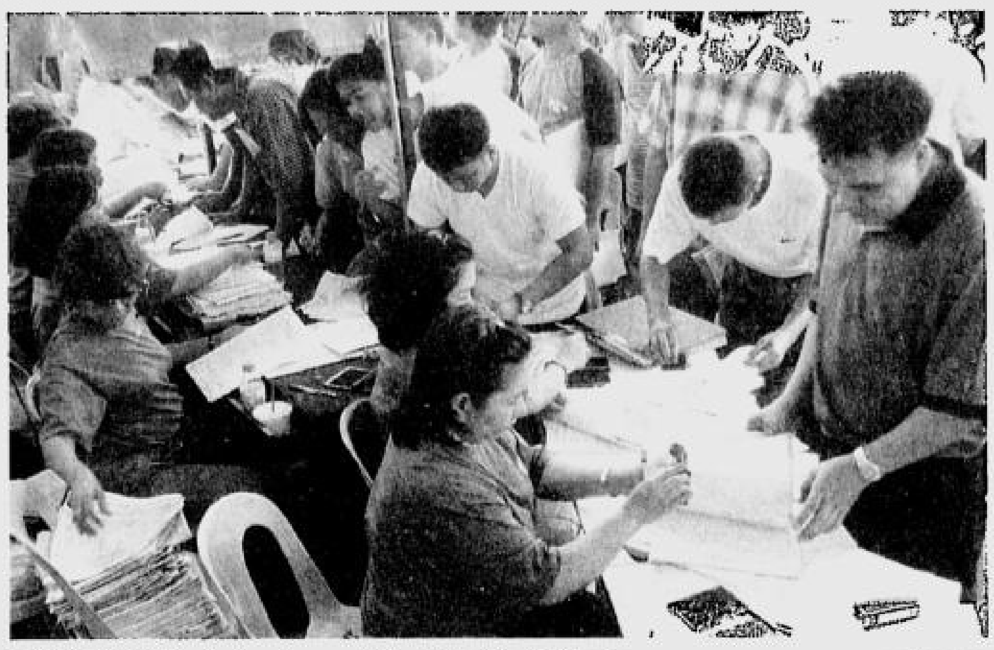
Second FRONTPAGE



TAXPAYERS file their returns at the BIR office in Manila.

ERIK ARAZAS

Tax deadline extended

IF YOU haven't paid your taxes yet, you have until Monday, April 21, to do so.

The Bureau of Internal Revenue yesterday decided to extend the April 15 deadline for taxpayers to settle their obligations with the government.

BIR Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said those who pay their taxes within the extended period would be spared the late payment penalties of 25 percent on the tax due, plus another 25 percent in interest and compromise penalties.

Taxpayers may make their payments through the electronic filing and payments system available through the BIR's website or through 1,593 authorized agent banks nationwide.

Those filing returns without payments can file these with the BIR's 115 revenue district offices and the BIR-on-wheels in malls and shopping centers.

Parayno said the BIR decided to extend the deadline to compensate for the time lost because of a slowdown of the agency's electronic filing system as well as the reduced banking days because of the Holy Week break.

The BIR collects 80 percent of the government's revenues every year. This year it must raise P424 billion to help meet a deficit target of P202 billion.

The bureau has to collect P47.4 billion in April.

Authorized banks have extended their banking hours from the usual 3 p.m. closing to 5 p.m. starting yesterday to accommodate the tax payment rush. *Clarissa S. Batino*

New envoy sees bright prospects for RP in Iraq

By Gil C. Cabancungan Jr.

AS the scramble starts among international companies for projects in postwar Iraq, the newly appointed Philippine ambassador to Iraq, Jose Ibazeta, has rushed to form a team of businessmen to scour for business opportunities in war-torn Baghdad.

"It is important for the Philippines to move fast and act as one in making a bid for the vast construction projects in Iraq and beat other country-aspirants such as India and Pakistan," Ibazeta said in an interview.

"My mandate from the President is to raise the Philippine flag in postwar Iraq and make sure that everyone knows that the Philippines can supply all construction projects. I see my role as translating into a language that businessmen can understand the opportunities in Iraq and how they can maximize these opportunities," Ibazeta said.

Philippine team

Ibazeta said the "Philippine team" would be composed of all prospective players in postwar Iraq from labor contractors to engineering and construction firms to telecommunication firms.

"There will be one office that would seek out the potential deals and business prospects which Philippine businessmen could fulfill," Ibazeta said.

He explained that the bidding for projects would not depend entirely on the technical capability of the bidders but also on their ability to put up the needed bond. Therefore, apart from networking, the government will be providing financing to Filipino businessmen able to bag contracts in Iraq.

The Philippine Export-Import Credit earlier offered to guarantee up to $400 million of a Philippine contractor's deal in Iraq.

Ibazeta said there were many construction opportunities in Iraq not only because of the damage wrought by the bombardment but also because infrastructure development in the country has been stagnant for the past 12 years.

"The US is eager to start the clock in helping Iraq get back on its feet and the Philippines will help in jump-starting the process," Ibazeta said.

He said the country was looking to provide Iraq with a variety of labor requirements ranging from construction to dock workers to middle management officers to software programmers.

He said the Philippines was banking on the country's good reputation as a reliable supplier of skilled workers as well as its close links with Washington in landing contracts in Iraq.

At least 100,000 Filipinos are expected to be deployed to Iraq within the next 12 months, double the number of overseas Filipino workers in neighboring Kuwait.

Administration congressmen have hailed President Macapagal-Arroyo's move to name a new ambassador to Iraq even before the rebuilding of the war-torn country has started as they believe this would place the Philippines way ahead in the competition for reconstruction projects.

"It's a good move because we are sure that there will be a new government in Iraq very soon. It's also good that we don't have a hiatus in the relations between the Philippines and Iraq," said Raul Gonzalez, the deputy speaker for the Visayas.

"It's good to be prepared," said Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay, the chair of the House committee on national defense.

Pichay said the President had the moral high ground on the issue of the Philippines getting a share of the Iraq reconstruction pie, having staked her political life in supporting the US campaign against the Saddam Hussein regime.

Gonzalez said the Philippines need not assert itself in getting a role in the reconstruction of Iraq as the US was well aware it has been a faithful ally. The US request for the deployment of Filipino peace-keeping troops in Iraq was a recognition of the Philippine role, he said.

He also said Filipinos' many years of experience working in the Middle East was well-known and would be an advantage over workers of other nations.

He said the President was playing her cards well despite a new survey showing widespread disapproval of her staunch support for the United States.

"The President has been proven correct in her position notwithstanding attacks against her stand. I think it will bear fruit very soon and her critics will be eating their words," Gonzalez said.

He also approved the government's handling of the Iraqi ambassador whose status here has been described by Foreign Secretary Blas Ople as "in limbo."

Gonzalez said the new Iraqi ambassador should not be accredited because he was an appointee of the deposed Saddam regime.

"I think the government is correct in treating this Iraqi ambassador while there is still that question of legitimacy of a government in Iraq," Gonzalez said.

He cited the example of the Iraqi ambassador to the United Nations who left his post as soon as it became clear that the US had the upper hand in the war. *With a report from Juliet Labog-Javellana*

Bishops say it's immoral to feed on Iraqis' misery

By Armand Nocum

A PANEL from the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines yesterday said it would be "immoral" for the Philippines to send 100,000 Filipino workers to help rebuild Iraq, adding the country should not feed on the "misery" of the Iraqis.

But the CBCP's Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrant and Itinerant People (ECPC-MIP) welcomed the sending of a peace-keeping force to Iraq to help restore order and stop the looting.

In a press briefing, ECPC-MIP chair Bishop Ramon Arguelles said that although it was good to help countries in need, money should not be the sole motive.

"We build Iraq not because we want to help, but because we want to get their money and that is not nice," Arguelles said at a press briefing.

Arguelles also announced the results of a survey on the destructive social effects of migration on the families of overseas Filipino workers.

The 10-month survey was a joint project of the ECPC-MIP, the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration and the Scalabrini Migration Center.

He explained that although it was all right for Filipinos to work abroad, it was a different matter for the government to make it a "policy" to send out workers simply because it is unable to provide employment for them here.

Palace puts up brave front with -14 rating

By Carlito Pablo

MALACAÑANG is putting up a brave front in the face of the lowest-ever popularity rating—negative 14—obtained by President Macapagal-Arroyo due to her unabashed support of the United States-led war against Iraq.

In an official statement yesterday, the Palace said many Filipinos believed the country needed a working President more than a popular one. Providing this piece of consolation was a survey conducted by the Social Weather Station (SWS) from March 8-20.

The survey, according to the Palace, "shows that the people continue to appreciate what President Macapagal is doing to keep Filipinos safe from criminals and terrorists and to bring food, shelter, education, health and other vital services at the doorstep of the poor."

Curiously, Malacañang did not release the SWS report, only its interpretation of it. It was not made clear, for instance, if the March 4 bombing of the Davao City international airport, which killed 23 people and wounded at least 150 others, was factored into the survey.

More curious still, Ms Macapagal got the negative 14 rating in another SWS survey conducted from March 10-25.

It will be recalled that Ms Macapagal jumped the gun on the SWS by citing the results of this latter survey a day before the poll body released the same. She said her decision to support the war would be vindicated.

In yesterday's statement, Malacañang insisted that her position "may have lessened her popularity, but still most Filipinos like the way she runs the government." It pointed to the March 8-20 survey where the President "gained a very impressive positive 15 net satisfaction rating under the issue of national security."

This was positive 3 points higher than the net satisfaction rating she received in another SWS survey on the same subject conducted from Nov. 15 to Dec. 2 last year, the Palace said.

Poaching raps filed vs 10 Malaysian fishermen

PROSECUTORS have filed poaching charges against 10 Malaysian fishermen who were caught in Philippine waters earlier this month, an official said yesterday.

Navy spokesperson Cmdr. Geronimo Malabanan said the fishermen were arrested on April 3 and that tens of kilograms of assorted fish were confiscated.

The Navy approached two Malaysian-registered boats about 5 kilometers off Fearless Shoal, near Balabac island and near the border with Malaysia.

One vessel escaped to Malaysian waters. But 10 crewmen from the other boat who were allegedly fishing illegally in dinghies were caught, Navy Commodore Gilmer Batestil said.

The charges, filed on April 8 in the Palawan Provincial Regional Trial Court, carry a fine of at least P5.2 million, confiscation of the catch and the fishing vessel used. AP

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SAVE THIS AD

Overseas Pinoys asked to make SARS sacrifice

OVERSEAS Filipino workers were yesterday urged to make a "sacrifice" by not coming home during the Holy Week to help spare the country from the SARS virus.

Bishop Ramon Arguelles, chair of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' Episcopal Commission for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People, said President Macapagal-Arroyo was correct to appeal to OFWs, especially those in SARS-hit Hong Kong, to postpone their vacations here.

"I think they should hold off their trips lest they cause the spread of the disease here. It is a sacrifice, but worth taking for the sake of others," the bishop told reporters.

At the Department of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said he had instructed officials at Philippine diplomatic posts abroad to institute contingency measures to prevent the spread of SARS among OFWs.

The measures include the setting up of a SARS desk at every embassy or consulate to dispense the latest information on the killer disease and to monitor the incidence of SARS among Filipinos in each area.

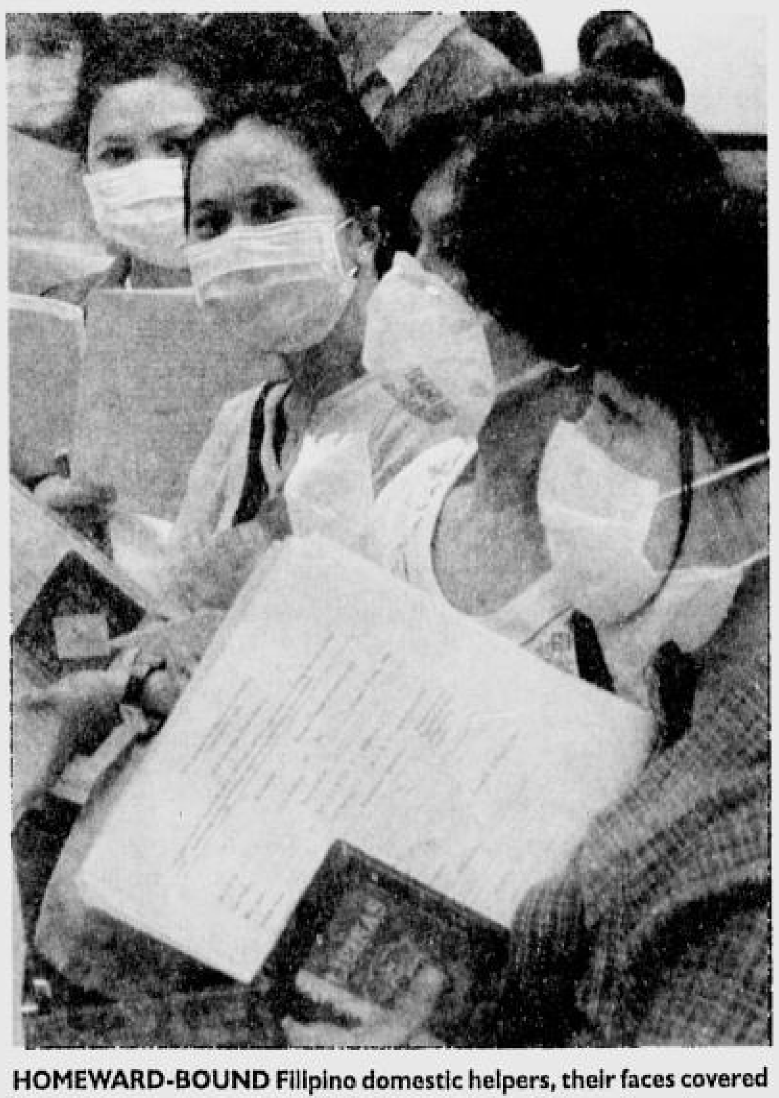
"This is part of the preventive measures ordered by the President," Ople said, adding that access to official reports of the World Health Organization and the Department of Health would help reduce panic among Filipinos abroad.

Ople also said the Philippines was fortunate to have no confirmed SARS case so far. But he maintained that special attention should be given to the health needs of OFWs, including seafarers who travel from port to port.

He said he had also instructed embassy officials in China to make sure that all Filipinos working there were properly informed on SARS.

There are 700 Filipinos in China's Guangdong province, where the disease is believed to have originated.

According to the DFA, Filipinos in China remain calm and have kept to their normal routines despite the SARS outbreak. Hospital employees, however, are required to wear protective masks while on duty. *Reports from Armand N. Nocum and Norman Bordadora*



HOMEWARD-BOUND Filipino domestic helpers, their faces covered by masks, queue up at the Philippine consulate in Hong Kong to renew their travel documents as they prepare to return home.

DANTE PERALTA/PINOY ABROAD

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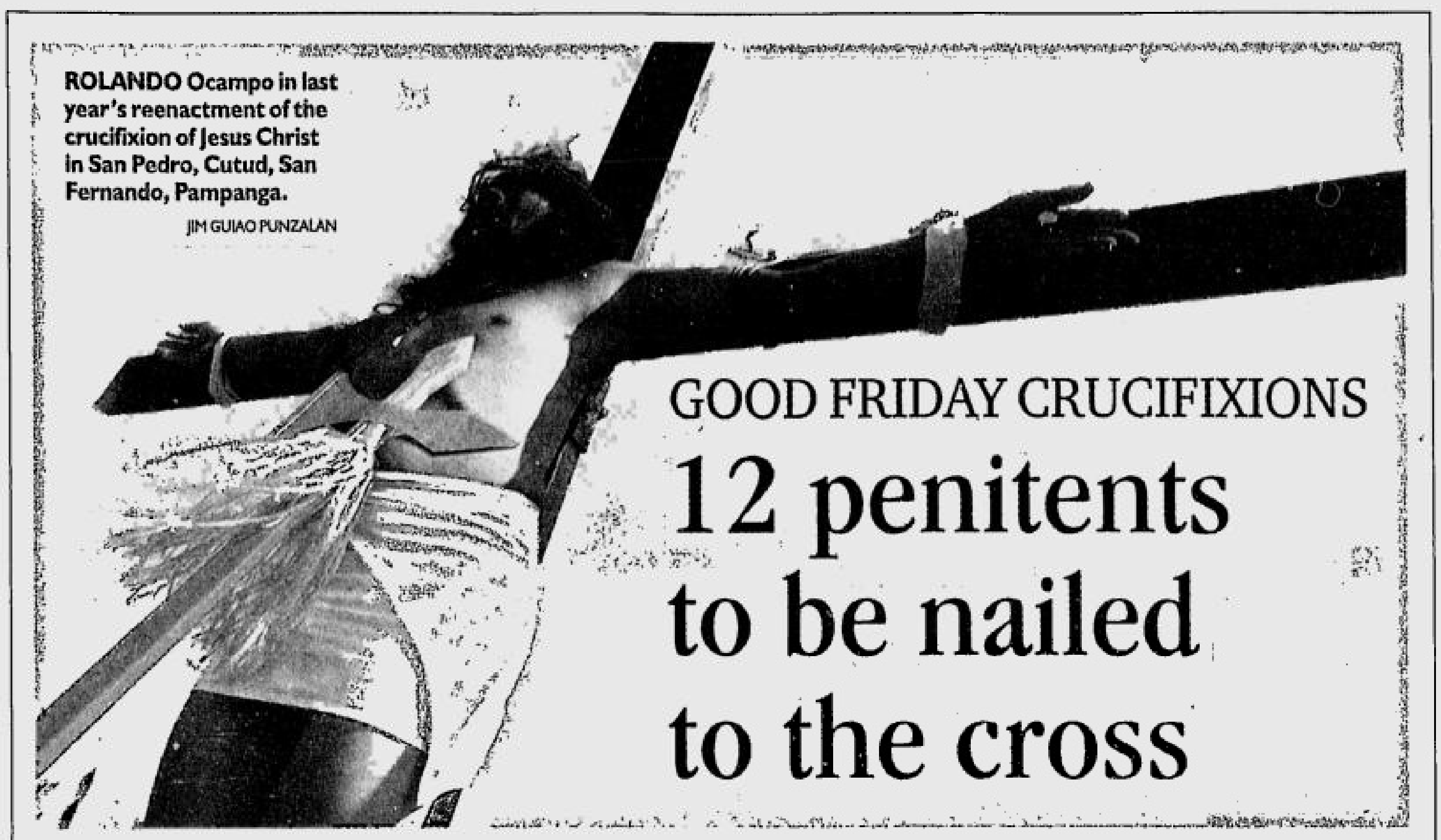

ROLANDO Ocampo in last year's reenactment of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ in San Pedro, Cutud, San Fernando, Pampanga.

JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

GOOD FRIDAY CRUCIFIXIONS

12 penitents to be nailed to the cross

By Jun Malig
PDI Central Luzon Desk

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—In a spectacle of ritual self-castigation that has become a yearly tourist attraction here, at least 12 penitents will have themselves nailed to the cross at a make-believe "Golgotha" in the middle of a lahar-covered rice field in Barangay San Pedro Cutud on Good Friday.

Police officials have tightened security in the designated Via Crucis (Way of the Cross) area where the event is to take place for the protection of domestic and foreign tourists, including foreign journalists, who flock here during the crowd-drawing ritual.

Senior Supt. Rodolfo Mendoza, the Pampanga police director, said some foreign journalists covering the real-life reenactment of the Crucifixion have expressed concern over their security.

Playing the role of Jesus Christ this year is 42-year-old Ruben Enaje, a house painter and carpenter who has made a devotion of offering himself for voluntary crucifixion for the past 16 years.

Also to be "crucified" on Good Friday here are the brothers Chito and Arnel Sangalang, Arnold Maniago and Bob Velez. Zoilo Castro Jr., San Pedro Cutud Barangay chair, said these men have already signed the required waiver for the ritual.

He said several others are expected to finalize their participation by Maundy Thursday.

Penitents undertake to experience Christ's passion and death by having themselves crucified to wooden crosses for 10 to 15 minutes with the use of alcohol-soaked, four-inch long stainless steel spikes.

Apart from a desire to atone for their sins, the yearly ritual is a form of thanksgiving for answered prayers, as well as a supplication for a miracle, protection and good health for loved ones and for peace.

Enaje said he is also offering his "sacrifice" on Good Friday in thanksgiving for the quick end to the war in Iraq.

Joining the Christ figures' journey on the Via Crucis on Good Friday will be some 500 flagellants from all over the city.

Unlike in past years, foreigners have been banned from participating in the crucifixion.

In 1995, a Belgian nun tried to join the penitents but the Belgian Embassy reportedly refused to allow her to be nailed to the cross.

In 1996, a Japanese, who identified himself as Shinichiro Kaneko, participated in the religious ritual, explaining to organizers that he wanted to be nailed to the cross to ask God to cure his cancer-stricken younger brother.

The Japanese claimed that voluntary crucifixion in the Philippines was popular among his countrymen for their supposed "miraculous effects."

It was found out later, however, that he and his companions had used the scene for a movie they were making.

Although the Church discourages the ritual, the yearly spectacle has been attracting thousands of local and foreign tourists and journalists. Last year it drew an estimated 20,000 people.

On Monday, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines criticized the practice, saying there were other ways to imitate Christ.

Instead of having themselves nailed to the cross, penitents should just "confess, go to Mass and meditate on the Passion of Christ, said Msgr. Hernando Coronel, the CBCP secretary general.

Lawyer likens Erap to Jesus

By Volt Contreras

AFTER making Joseph Estrada undergo spiritual healing through a "miraculous bath" last year, his defense attorneys are ready to quote Scriptures in his defense.

One of Estrada's court-appointed lawyers yesterday said he is currently drafting the opening statement of their client's defense that will contain passages comparing Estrada's predicament with no less than "the trial of Jesus Christ." This is because there are "similarities" between the Gospel stories on how Jesus was persecuted and how Estrada was ousted and later charged with a capital offense, according to Prospero Crescini.

"Jesus Christ was put to trial because the politicians and the religious leaders of his time were envious and afraid of his popularity," he said. "This also applies to the politicians and religious leaders today (in the case of Estrada)."

Also yesterday, the Sandiganbayan allowed Estrada to host a party on his 66th birthday this Black Saturday inside his detention suite. The court, though, said Estrada should limit his guests to family members.

It's the second time Estrada will be marking his birthday detained at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City.

If he will follow court's orders strictly, this year's celebration will gather a thinner crowd of well-wishers compared to last year's when around 200 of his relatives, friends and political allies came to cheer him up while some 5,000 supporters massed around the tightly guarded VMMC compound.

Crescini said the civil society movement which worked for Estrada's downfall can be likened to the civilian authorities of Christ's day "represented by Pontius Pilate."

Anti-Estrada forces in the religious sector mirror the influential Jewish Sanhedrin which accused Christ of blasphemy, he added.

Crescini said the piece he is composing along these lines was inspired by a book he had just read titled "Jesus on Trial" by James Montgomery Boice and Philip Graham Ryken.

"If you would read that, you can see upon closer analysis that there are similarities in the motives" shown by the enemies of Jesus and Estrada, he claimed.

But Crescini, one of the four lawyers appointed by the Sandiganbayan to defend the ex-president, said his group is still awaiting word whether Estrada will rehire the private counsels whom he dismissed in February 2002.

In earlier interviews, Estrada's spokesperson Raymund Fortun said the jailed ex-president might announce the return of his former legal team on his birthday.

But until that decision is made, Crescini said, "we are making our own plans" for Estrada's defense.

One of the strategies in consideration is not to call Estrada himself to the witness' stand, he said.

"I don't think there is still a need to present Erap. We can do without him," he said. "He might just be unduly harassed by the prosecution. *Baka mapikon lang.*"

The Estrada trial at the Sandiganbayan—where he faces three criminal charges including the capital offense of plunder—is currently on a long lull after state prosecutors rested their case last April 9.

6 Abu bandits slain in clashes

ZAMBOANGA CITY—At least six Abu Sayyaf bandits have been killed in clashes in Basilan and Jolo while a grenade attack killed a barangay official in North Cotabato, the military said yesterday.

Two Abu Sayyaf bandits—identified as Ustadz Jamirin Indama and Tuhad Hamid—were killed in a clash with government forces on Monday off Tongolan island near Basilan, said Col. Bonifacio Ramos, commander of the Army's 103rd Brigade in Basilan.

A soldier and a civilian volunteer accompanying the troops were also wounded.

The bandits were believed to be fleeing to Basilan from Jolo island where a massive military operation has been launched to rescue as many as five Filipino hostages held by the rebels.

Ramos said Indama, who belonged to a faction headed by Abu Sayyaf leader Isnilon Hapilon, was responsible for many of the beheadings committed by the bandit group.

The military recovered a large cache of ammunition reportedly belonging to another Abu Sayyaf faction which was once led by Aldam Tilao, alias Abu Sabaya, who was killed last year.

Ramos said personal belongings and documents captured after the clash would help the military in its campaign against the Abu Sayyaf.

One bandit, identified as Bashier Abdul, was arrested after a clash in Lantawan town later the same day. Ramos said that Abdul, who was arrested on charges of kidnapping with ransom and serious illegal detention, had fled to Sulu but returned to Basilan apparently believing the manhunt against him had been called off.

Army troops meanwhile stormed a suspected Abu Sayyaf lair near the town of Talipao in Jolo also on Monday, triggering an hour-long running gun battle in which four gunmen were killed, the Jolo Army chief Col. Alexander Aleo said.

"At least four are confirmed dead, but enemy casualties could be more. We have radio intercepts saying more rebels are wounded in the clash. Two soldiers were also wounded," Aleo said.

Aleo said the rebel unit the soldiers had fought was a unit under the command of Abu Sayyaf leader Ghalib Andang, who in 2000 launched a cross-border raid into the Malaysian resort of Sipadan and kidnapped 21 mostly European hostages.

The hostages were released in batches over several months allegedly in exchange for millions of dollars in ransom later used by the gunmen to buy more firearms, military sources have said.

It was not clear if Andang, also known as commander Robot, was involved in the Monday clash.

The clashes came on the same day that President Macapagal-Arroyo vowed there will be no easing of military operations to crush the gunmen during the long Holy Week break.

The President's statement came after a Chinese-Filipino businesswoman was kidnapped reportedly by Abu Sayyaf on Siasi island, adding to the four Jehovah's Witnesses women preachers kidnapped in August last year.

In Central Mindanao, two suspected members of the separatist Moro Islamic Liberation Front hurled a grenade at a restaurant in Kabacan, North Cotabato where local officials were meeting late Monday, killing one official and wounding seven other people. *AFP with a report from Julie Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau.*

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19 PNP officers reshuffled in wake of key retirement

By TJ Burgonio

POLICE officials last night announced a major reshuffle in the national headquarters and regional offices involving 19 one-star generals and full colonels.

Senior Supt. Leopoldo Bataoil, Philippine National Police spokesperson, said the reorganization was an offshoot of the retirement of Deputy Director General Clyde Fernandez, deputy chief for administration, on April 1.

Earlier, Fernandez's retirement triggered a minor reshuffle at the top. Deputy Director General Edgar Aglipay succeeded Fernandez; Deputy Director General Virtus Gil assumed Aglipay's post as deputy chief for operation, and Director Victor Signey took over Gil's position as the chief of the directorial staff.

Last night, Bataoil released the names of the 19 police officials and their new posts in the second wave of reorganization: Chief Superintendents Oscar Calderon, acting director for comptrollership (Signey's former post); Vidal Querol, regional director for Region 3 (Calderon's post); Enrique Galang, acting director for operations (Querol's post); Jaime Caringal, regional director for Region 4-A (Galang's post); and Jesus Versoza, acting director for Intelligence Group (Caringal's post); Senior Supt. Andres Caro, acting director for Aviation Security Group (Versoza's post).

C/Supt. Romulo Sales, acting director for investigation and detective management, replacing Director Lucas Managuelod; C/Supt. Rolando Garcia, acting director for research and development, replacing retiring Chief Supt. Jose Poblete; C/ Supt. George Alino, director for Region 2, replacing Sales; C/ Supt. Reynaldo Varilla, director for Region 7, replacing Garcia; C/Supt. Jaime Lasar, director for Region 12, replacing Senior Supt. Nestor Sanares;

Senior Supt. Alejandro Lapinid, acting director for Region 4-B, replacing Senior Supt. Medardo Apacible; S/ Supt. Isnaji Bantala, acting director for the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, replacing retiring Senior Supt. Acmad Omar; S/ Supt. Johnny Salvana, acting director for Computer Service, replacing S/ Supt. Leonilo dela Torre;

S/ Supt. Jose Antonio Salvacion, acting director for the Philippine National Police Academy, replacing Varilla; S/ Supt. Ricardo Dapat, director for the Maritime Group, replacing Alino; S/ Supt. Alejandro Andres, acting deputy director for intelligence; and S/Supt. Ricardo Quinto, acting deputy director for research and development.

Bataoil said the reshuffle, which has been approved by Director General Hermogenes Ebdane Jr., takes effect April 21

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Laguna de Bay cited at World Water Forum

From page A1

nizations and other groups to work together in lake conservation and promoting sustainable development.

The Anglo-Dutch consumer products conglomerate Unilever is the global sponsor of Living Lakes, which strives for the sustainable development of lakes and wetlands as well as the preservation of water quality, habitats of rare animals, migratory birds and plants in lake areas.

According to Unilever chairs Antony Burgmans and Niall Fitzgerald, Laguna de Bay and four other case studies illustrate the "practical partnership approach to the improvement of lake conditions."

"Partner lakes and wetlands differ widely in character yet have many management issues in common," they noted.

Laguna de Bay was admitted to Living Lakes during the network's 2001 conference at Russia's Lake Baikal, another network member.

Other members are Biwa in Japan, Mahakam in Indonesia, Poyang-hu in China, Tengiz in Kazakhstan, the Dead Sea in Israel, Uluabat in Turkey, Victoria in Kenya, Larache Wetlands in Morocco, Nestos in Greece, Milicz Ponds in Poland, Peipsi and Vortsjarv in Estonia and Russia, Mar Chiquita in Argentina, Pantanal in Brazil, Paraguay and Bolivia, Laguna Fuquene in Colombia, Chapala in Mexico, Mono in the United States, and the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads in the United Kingdom.

WATER, water everywhere... Not anymore. Water summit in Japan reiterates call to conserve our water resources.

And Living Lakes is growing, said GNF president Marion Hammerl. "According to our long-term strategy, by 2005 the network will comprise about 40 partner lakes and 50 associated members," Hammerl said.

First of its kind

Laguna de Bay has been repeatedly cited by the network for coming up with CLEAR (for Conservation of Laguna de Bay's Environment and Resources), a tripartite body composed of the nongovernment Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands (SCPW), the state-run Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) and Unilever Philippines, representing the business sector.

The tripartite approach to lake conservation was "a first of its kind" for Living Lakes, said the network officials.

In Manila, SCPW president Amy Lecciones said they decided to join the partnership because it provided society the opportunity to implement a site-based project demonstrating wetland conservation strategies. "The concept appealed because of its practical and holistic approach," she also said.

The SCPW was established in 1998 to advocate the conservation of the more than 60 important wetland areas in the country and to serve as a forum for national and regional wetland issues.

In the Living Lakes toolkit, CLEAR is described as "a pioneering partnership between government, civil society and the private sector in the spirit of Agenda 21."

Its programs in the first five-year plan include a biodiversity survey, environmental education training and ecology courses focusing on lake management, lake monitoring for community and industry and advocacy campaigns to encourage stakeholder support.

Chito Macapagal, Unilever general manager for corporate development, said that "through this partnership the true spirit of Agenda 21 can be made alive."

Macapagal likened the partnership to a wooden bridge: "We will all be braver and feel more confident as we cross this bridge of the unknown, not in one but all three planks laid down side by side."

The LLDA's Lennie Santos-Borja said there was "no one-fits-all solution" to lake problems "because every lake is different, but often there are issues in common." Like some of its partners, Laguna de Bay's most pressing problems are pollution and siltation from domestic, industrial and agricultural wastes, Borja pointed out.

Breakthrough

Late last year, the House of Representatives issued Resolution No. 140 commending the tripartite partnership for its success in making Laguna de Bay the 18th member of Living Lakes and for "achieving a breakthrough for the Philippines with the unique partnership among the government, business and NGO sectors."

Since its creation in 1975, the LLDA has been operating with an emphasis on regulation and control. But recently it has recognized "the need to be developmental and is now aggressively pursuing this role."

LLDA general manager Calixto Cataquiz told the INQUIRER that their agency had also forged a sister-lake partnership with Taihu lake through China's Bureau of Water Conservation.

Its agreement with Taihu lake officials is aimed at "improving watershed management strategies and programs by building human and technical capacities through information and resource sharing."

In its 2002 accomplishment report, the LLDA cited, among others, its participation in the drafting of the World Lake Vision (upon the invitation of the International Lake Environment Committee, the United Nations Environment Program and the Shiga Prefecture).

The program, which was presented at the recent forum, provides a "set of guiding principles for developing effective management programs for the world's lakes" and "calls for strategies aimed at addressing various kinds of threats."

Above all, the World Lake Vision (WLV) is a "call to action," which acknowledges that "the key to the sustainable use of lakes is finding a balance between the water needs of humanity and the ability of nature to meet these water needs over the long term."

In crisis

The WLV Committee noted that "many of the world's most important lakes are in crisis, beset by a myriad of problems that affect the quantity and quality of the water they contain, the organisms they support and their ability to meet the water needs of the surrounding human populations."

But despite clear evidence of this, the committee noted, "most lakes still lack the kind of well-conceived, integrated plan needed to manage them in a way that both insures their health and supports human water needs over the long term."

"Current lake management and conservation efforts typically fail because their approach is too narrowly focused and fragmented," it said.

Sen. Edgardo Angara, head of the Philippine delegation to the World Water Forum, affirmed the country's commitment to the plan of action "for our survival and for our future."

Reading the country's statement, he said: "While the Philippine government has undertaken critical steps toward water security, the road ahead of us is long and fraught with challenges. And given our lack of resources, it promises to be a difficult road.

"Yet we are confident that our government, working hand in hand with local communities and private organizations, will work more effectively in ensuring the sustainable use and management of our water resources. It is our most solid and viable option, and one that brings together communities and people . . .

"Water is our lifeblood, one that is absolutely essential to our survival." *(To be concluded)*

Summer typhoon threatens to hit Luzon

From page A1

Islands last week has intensified into a typhoon.

"This disturbance has intensified into a typhoon and may pose a threat to the Luzon area," the weather bureau said.

At 2 p.m. yesterday, the typhoon was estimated about 2,000 km east of Luzon with maximum sustained winds of 150 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 180 kph. It is expected to move westward at 24 kph in the direction of Northern and Central Luzon.

A Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration advisory said the typhoon will be named "Amang" once it enters the Philippine area of responsibility.

Pagasa said the eye of the typhoon is estimated to be at 1,180 km east of Southern Luzon by Wednesday afternoon, 900 km southeast of Northern Luzon on Thursday afternoon, and 460 km east southeast of Northern Luzon by Friday afternoon. Rains with occasional gusty winds will start to be experienced in these areas.

The summer typhoon is expected to bring much needed rain to drought stricken areas. But it would also dampen the vacation of hundreds of thousands of Filipinos trooping to the beaches and cooler mountain regions during the Lenten break.

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Ping questions SC ruling to revive Kuratong case

By N. Bordadora

SEN. Panfilo "Ping" Lacson yesterday formally questioned the Supreme Court's decision to re-open the Kuratong Baleleng multiple murder case, claiming the government is persecuting to impede his bid for the presidency.

In his lengthy motion for reconsideration, Lacson questioned the Supreme Court's order for the prosecution of the controversial case instead of remanding the burden of deciding the re-opening of the case to the Quezon City regional trial court.

Lacson's lawyers at the Fortun, Narvasa and Salazar Law Office said the decision might set a dangerous precedent making the Supreme Court as legitimate "trier of the fact" instead of the regional trial courts.

"This honorable court's majority may have overlooked clear acts of persecution committed by the government against the respondent, the suffering and distress endured by him, and this administration's continuing campaign to impede, derail or prevent his candidacy." In his 99-page motion, Lacson said:

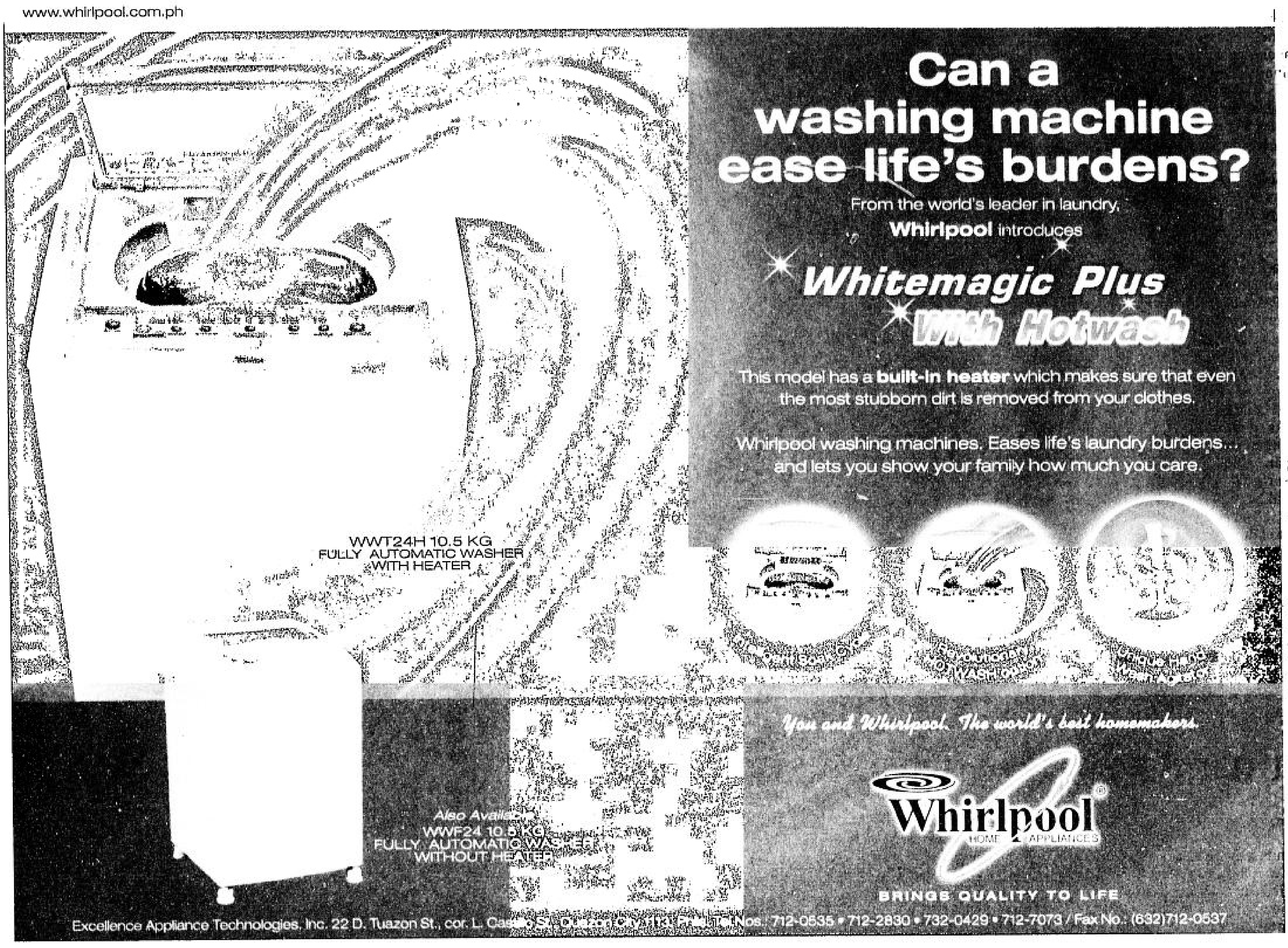
"This honorable court's majority decision sets a perilous precedent that may be misconstrued as an assumption by this honorable court of the trial court's role as triers of the fact," he added.

Lacson's lawyers aver that the question of whether or not Lacson consented to the provisional dismissal of the case with his subsequent legal motions should be decided by the Quezon City regional trial court and not by the Supreme Court.

The date of this consent would ascertain if the re-opening of the case falls within the prescriptive period for such court developments.

Aside from asking the Court to set aside its April 1 decision, Lacson said that Associate Justice Romeo Callejo should inhibit himself from the review of his motion for reconsideration. He said Callejo, who penned the April 1 decision, should have inhibited himself in the first place.

Lacson said that when Callejo was still in the Court of Appeals and the court was hearing the Kuratong Baleleng rubout case, the associate justice inhibited himself.



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Dividends

EDITORIAL

FOLLOWING the fall of Baghdad, President Macapagal-Arroyo received an unexpected call from President George W. Bush, thanking her for her support for the US war policy on Iraq and expressing appreciation for committing the Philippines to the rebuilding of post-war Iraq.

Many may disagree passionately with Bush's decision to invade Iraq without the legitimating mandate of the United Nations Security Council resolution, but ingratitude is not one of his faults.

Indeed, President Macapagal was one of the leaders of the 30-odd countries which formed the US-led "coalition of the willing." Aside from Ms Macapagal, the leaders of Spain and Italy were among those who received Bush's gesture of thoughtfulness.

In that coalition, however,only two others sent troops to invade Iraq—Britain which dispatched 20,000 Royal Marines, together with tanks, armor, war planes and warships, and Australia, which sent 2,000 troops plus a few warships and planes. Of the allies, the British troops won their sector magnificently (thanks to their historical experience in the Middle East, the Falklands War and the Northern Ireland campaign). As belligerents, Bush consulted often with British Prime Minister Tony Blair and Australian Prime Minister John Howard and they were given daily briefings on the progress of the war.

As participants, Britain and Australia form the inner core of the coalition that has assumed responsibility for restoring order in Iraq, paving the way for the administrative and political transition of Iraq in the thankless task of transforming it into a democracy.

Howard, for example, is extremely flattered that Australia has now achieved the status of an "occupying power," a responsibility and distinction given to the four powers that occupied Berlin in 1945—the United States, Britain, France and Russia.

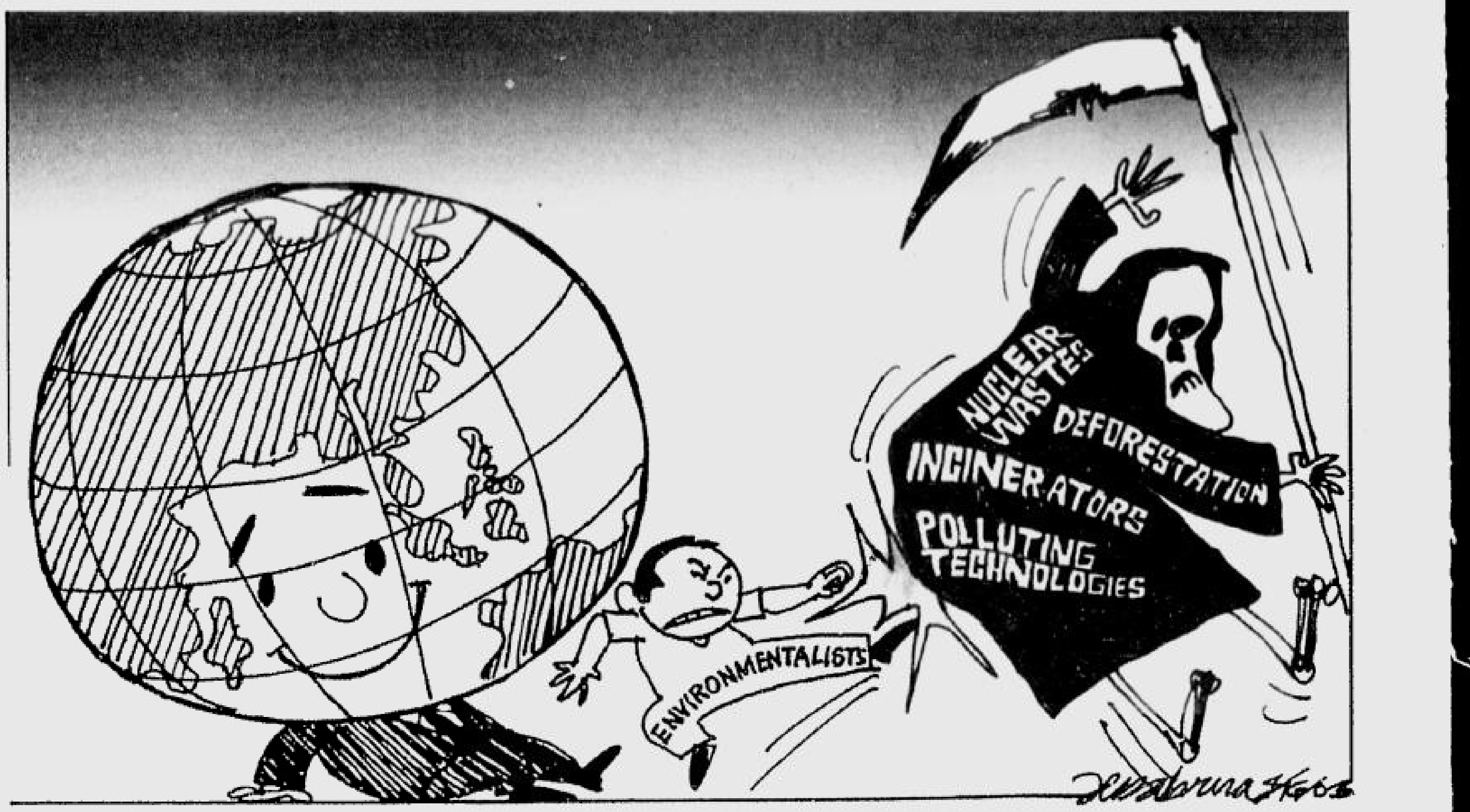
The United States, echoed by Australia, wants to play the leading role in the occupation of Iraq, sidetracking the United Nations, despite the warning by Secretary General Koffi Anan that it is only the UN that can give legitimacy to foreign presence in Iraq in the ocean of the Arab world. Annan is perfectly correct. While the United States and its military allies paid with the lives of some of their soldiers and their wealth in the successful military campaign, it is not the victory that will facilitate the rebuilding of Iraq and its political order. No matter how Saddam Hussein was detested by his own people and by most in the Arab world, the Arabs cannot tolerate a lengthy American or coalition military occupation and presence in an Arab land.

While the military campaign was prosecuted by the military contributors, it is important for Bush to maintain the fiction that the "coalition of the willing" comprised more than 30 countries to give it a veneer of international support and legitimacy.

Members of a winning coalition, no matter how modest one's contribution is, do get some of the spoils of victory. The minor players may not be in the category of "occupying powers," but as pointed out by President Macapagal, the Philippines can play a role in the post-war reconstruction of Iraq by sending humanitarian missions and participating in the civil works arising from reconstruction.

In plain terms, Filipino construction companies may not be excluded in construction contracts in Iraq, and this is one of the fruits of being with the winning side. Those who opposed are to be excluded in having any say in the affairs of post-war Iraq. The French and the Germans, for example, are blocked out of the shaping of post-war Iraq. Their opposition to the American war has left deep wounds which have split the transatlantic alliance, and have alienated many European countries from Washington. In the aftermath of this rupture, French and German economic relations with the United States are bound to suffer.

As a member of the alliance of the victorious, President Macapagal may now go ahead with her planned state visit to Washington, interrupted by the war, with a warm welcome from the Bush administration. What economic benefits we will derive from that alignment with the United States, however, remain unclear.



Why is Lorenzo sitting on DAO 17?

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

ONE more reason why we should impose stricter measures to prevent the entry of the deadly SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) into the country is the conclusion by the regional Political and Economic Risk Consultancy (PERC) that the Philippines is scarcely prepared to deal with SARS once it sweeps into the country. The Philippines ranked only seventh of 12 Asian countries, in the PERC survey on their preparedness to deal with SARS. The survey was made in the first two months of the year, before the outbreak of the disease.

The best prepared countries, according to the survey, were Singapore, Japan and Hong Kong. Yet for all its preparedness, Hong Kong has been unable to control the spread of the disease. Next to China, Hong Kong has been hardest hit by the disease. As of last count, it has reported 1,150 SARS cases with 40 deaths. It has been unable to stop the spread of the disease, infecting even medical personnel. New cases and more deaths are reported daily. So far, 3,200 people have been afflicted, with 122 deaths worldwide.

If this can happen in Hong Kong which is better prepared and most advanced in the fight against SARS, imagine what can happen here, which is not prepared for the disease, once SARS gets here. In spite of all the brave talk and assurance from our President and the health secretary, we don't even have a laboratory that can test blood samples from suspected SARS patients. We have to send the sample from the lone suspected SARS case here to Japan. There won't be any results until after two weeks, by which time others may have already been infected.

The best defense is still prevention. Which means preventing the possible entry of SARS carriers. Which in turn means being more strict in allowing the entry of travelers form SARS-infected countries. We don't have to be squeamish about stricter measures. Other countries are already doing it. Why not us? We have to protect our citizens. These other countries will understand.

For if this deadly disease manages to slip through, there would be hell to pay.

* * *

The tactic of Meralco regarding the refund of the P28 billion it overcharged its customers is: one step backward, two steps forward. While saying that it would obey the Supreme Court order to refund Meralco customers, it is at the same time asking the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) for another power rate increase. The ERC has, in effect, already turned down Meralco's petition but the power company's motto is obviously "never say die." It has filed a motion for reconsideration.

Meralco has asked for a P1.22 per kWh rate increase through the unbundling of its rates (breaking up the power rates—as they appear in the monthly bills of customers—into different components such as generation, transmission, distribution and supply charges). The ERC decision will result in a 22-centavo per kWh increase but that is not good enough for Meralco. It wants another P1 rate hike.

Meanwhile, Meralco customers should stop salivating and licking their chops for the expected P28 billion refund. That would be a long time coming. In fact, Meralco doesn't even have any idea how to make the refund. And when it does come, it would be the big corporate consumers who would benefit, not the small consumers who are the ones who desperately need the extra money.

The Freedom from Debt Coalition wants the refund paid in the form of Meralco shares of stocks. Which would give Meralco's 3.8 million consumers a 74 percent ownership of the power firm with 2.8 billion shares. The Lopezes have only a 4.4 percent share while the government has only a 25.5 percent stake.

This means that the consumers will have majority control of Meralco and should be running it. The question is who would represent the consumers in the Meralco board and management and would be receiving the fat salaries, per diems, allowances, bonuses and other perks? Would it be Rep. Etta Rosales and other members of the Freedom from Debt Coalition since they are at the forefront of this refund-to-shares proposal? A related question would be: what do they know about power distribution?

We would be creating a new class of tycoons who have no experience in running a power corporation. The supreme irony is that the people claiming to represent the poor and the working class would be catapulted into the shoes of instant capitalists and millionaires.

* * *

There seems to be a well-organized movement against Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun. Fishermen's groups are still seeking her ouster for revoking DENR Administrative Order 17 (DAO 17) prescribing the guidelines for the delineation of municipal waters as mandated by Republic Act 8850, otherwise known as the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998. Her critics claim that this was to repay the deep-sea fishermen (as exemplified by Rep. Brown Sandoval of Palawan) who would be benefited by the recall of DAO 17. However, the recall was to obey a legal opinion of the Department of Justice that it is the Department of Agriculture, not the DENR, that has the authority to issue the guidelines. (See As I See it/4-1-03).

It is a simple matter for Agriculture Secretary Cito Lorenzo to affix his signature to the same guidelines already issued by the DENR. But for some strange reason, Lorenzo is dragging his feet but the fishermen's groups are still zeroing in on Gozun and not on Lorenzo.

Something smells like rotting fish here.

Highs and lows

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

GLORIA Macapagal-Arroyo says she doesn't mind her rating dipping to an all-time low in the last SWS survey, the reason for it being her all-out support for the US war in Iraq. "I will never allow public opinion to deter me from a rightful and moral course," she said. "I have to take blows for standing on principle. I've done that often enough on many vital issues and I do not regret my decisions."

That is all very fine and noble, except for one thing. Which is that her record shows the exact opposite. It would have been more truthful for her to say: "I will never allow the rightful and moral course to deter me from soliciting public acclaim. I will not take blows for principle. I've done this before on many vital issues. My only regret is that I wasn't able to avoid the blows in all of them."

That was how she became President to begin with. The crowd that demanded the ousting of Erap demanded as well that she take a stand on principle and speak out. She never did so until it was a sure bet. It's something that has hounded her ever since, getting sore whenever the point is raised. As when the overseas workers in Hong Kong and elsewhere did a couple of years ago in her sortie there.

She supported the United States in the Iraq war because she thought it would be popular. It was the logical extension of her support for George W. Bush's "war against terror," which she thought would be popular. Which it was, especially after 9/11 and especially in this country. The surveys at the time showed the most credible person here was George Bush. He had a positive rating of 70 plus. I personally know how popular his gung-ho message was at that time by the irate emails (and threats) I got from Filipinos in the United States and at home for speaking out against it. It was a time for fear and timidity, but *I* would not be deterred by frenzy and bigotry from what I thought to be the rightful and moral course.

The tide changed only with the war in Iraq. I know that too personally from the e-mails that tumbled my way. The usual suspects were still there, the people who harangued and threatened from the safety of their homes while other people's children died an ocean away, but the majority had turned critical or pensive. There were fewer cries of "Let's climb into the wagon and shoot a few Indians." The new mood came from a cross-section of society, including Filipinos in the United States, many of whom, particularly those in San Francisco and Washington, found their own voices in the antiwar movement there. No, the SWS survey did not surprise me at all.

But how account for the shift in mood?

I would not discount the idea that the Filipino's sense of fair play has something to do with it. Or conversely, the Filipino's capacity to know when enough is enough—"*tama na, sobra na*," as he shouted at Edsa. The war would swiftly show that the threat Iraq posed to America was fabricated. One week after the coalition forces seized Iraq, they have yet to find weapons of mass destruction. Or more to the point, encounter them, which is what weapons of mass destruction are there for to begin with: to be used.

More importantly, there is the Catholic Church. It's a tossup which has a tighter grip on the imagination of this country, the United States or the Church. I've encountered both strands in e-mails and if I were to rule on it, I'd say this country's pro-Church stance has an edge over its pro-American one. Filipinos may look to America for their temporary salvation but they look to the Church for their eternal one. Unlike the "war against terror" in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, when the Church kept its peace or nodded its head in agreement, the war in Iraq has drawn the Church's fierce condemnation. The Pope himself spoke out against it in strident terms. It was echoed by the local clergy in the pulpit.

I can understand why Malacañang is currently at pains to go into "reconstruction mode." It is trying to exploit the Filipino predilection to forgive and forget, to avoid confrontations, to bury the past with blithe admonitions about life going on.

Last but not least, there are the overseas Filipino workers. GMA's own allies have suggested that as the primary reason for her ratings going into freefall, and they are right. It's not just that the number of OFWs in the Middle East is large, it is that the number of people they left behind in this country, not least in GMA's own province, is enormous. It is one thing to shout from the gallery and cheer on the winning side, it is another when the gallery collapses and you find yourself in the middle of the battlefield, at the receiving end of very real fire, friendly or hostile. That's what gave many Filipinos a reality check.

Less visibly, though far more lastingly, the OFWs gave many Filipinos to see the war not from above but from below. That shift in perspective probably accounts for the unpopularity of GMA's position more than any other. While GMA continued to look at the war in Iraq from the point of view of the invading force, where the faces of the Iraqi dead were buried in mounds of military jargon, if indeed they could be glimpsed at all, the OFWs—and their kin in this country—looked at it from the point of view of their Arab employers, their Arab neighbors, their Arab friends. And they will continue to do so because where the OFWs are, the war is by no means over. Where they are, nobody has yet gone into reconstruction mode.

Rep. Leovigildo Banaag, a GMA ally, says GMA's rating should change because when the SWS took its survey last month Filipinos were still gripped by anxiety over the war. I agree: GMA's rating will change. When the SWS took its survey, Filipinos hadn't yet seen their President dancing in Boracay while Iraq burned.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@info.com.ph

What or who's next?

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

US forces captured Tikrit, hometown of Saddam Hussein in northern Iraq, on Sunday, bringing to a symbolic end the three-week war on Iraq. Iraqi troops disintegrated before the US armored assault, as easily as Saddam's Republican Guard melted in the defense of Baghdad.

There was no trace of Saddam, his two sons and his senior officials and generals in Tikrit, where US officials had believed Saddam would make his last stand. The Americans thought that when they dropped their heaviest bombs on a restaurant in central Baghdad two Sundays ago, after they received an intelligence tip that Saddam and his sons were sighted, they had hit a bull's-eye. But US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld is not certain whether Saddam is buried under the debris, which is still being dug up.

The swift conquest of Iraq before the mightiest military power in history is an extraordinary event in military annals. But the overwhelming US military technology that backed the coalition's invasion has failed in two important respects.

First, it has failed to kill or capture Saddam and his senior coterie, identified as the most wanted "war criminals." The second is that after more than three weeks of war where coalition forces swept Iraq from north to south, the invaders have not uncovered the "smoking gun" on Iraq's arsenal of weapons of mass destruction. The second failure is more important because the compelling rationale of the invasion was precisely to disarm Iraq of weapons of mass destruction after it had toppled Saddam.

Saddam was no match to the coalition juggernaut. His regime collapsed and there's nothing more symbolic about regime change than Iraqis swarming in the streets of Baghdad and Basra, pulling down the heroic-sized statues of Saddam. Some over-enthusiastic observers compared the crumbling of Saddam's statues to the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the toppling of Stalin's statues when the Iron Curtain collapsed in Central Europe.

The United States hailed the fall of Baghdad as a "liberation," and when the mobs vented their anger on Saddam, with some bashing his pictures and spitting on them, there was no denying that the Iraqis had a deep-seated fear and hate of the dictator.

But the fall of Saddam also gave rise to fears about the emergence of a conquering military power which now stands astride in the Middle East like a triumphant colossus, flushed with its brilliant military success and flexing its newly confirmed technological power.

The Arabs in the Middle East and circumspect Western political commentators are now asking the question of who will be next to fall victim of US power—Syria? Iran? Fresh from the fall of Tikrit, President George W. Bush warned Syria that it had become a "haven of war criminals," and said that "we believe there are chemical weapons in Syria."

The first was in reference to reports that Saddam and his gang had fled to Syria and that during the war, Syria supplied "volunteers" and military equipment to Iraq—such as night goggles. The most revealing warning is about Syria as possessing chemical weapons. This is the first time that the United States has accused Syria as a haven of weapons of mass destruction.

The denunciation followed the failure of coalition forces to uncover Saddam's weapons of mass destruction. Whatever were discovered as facilities or drums of chemicals turned out, after close inspection, to be "pesticides." Without the discovery of these weapons, the US-led coalition loses its justification for going to war.

The United States did not rule out the possibility that Saddam would use these weapons as an instrument of last resort for regime survival. But Saddam never unleashed these weapons. The US military also figured out bloody street fighting in Iraq, where Saddam was thought to make his land stand. But this did not happen, and military commentators have described the swift invasion as a "cake walk."

But anyone who thinks that the US military occupation of Iraq would be short-lived will be disappointed. Gen. Tommy Franks, the American military commander, said the winding down of the military campaign did not signal a quick exit from Iraq. He said US forces had only bypassed villages and towns where there are still pockets of resistance to be mopped up. The United States has to restore civil order after the widespread looting that followed the collapse of the regime. But more important is that, according to Franks, Washington has earmarked 2,000 to 3,000 sites to be inspected for weapons of mass destruction. He said this search for the "smoking gun" could easily take 12 months.

And in this search, President Bush has cast his eyes further afield—in the direction of Syria—probably, just in case the American inspectors can't find the evidence inside Iraq.

With the surrender of Lt. Gen. Amir al-Saadi, Saddam's top science adviser who liaised with the UN inspectors led by Hans Blix, the United States hopes to be helped by Amir in the search for the weapons, but so far the general has maintained Iraq had no such cache claimed by Secretary of State Colin Powell.

Russian President Vladimir Putin told French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder in their summit at St. Petersburg that, "Nothing was found, and even at the last moment of their struggle for survival, the Iraqi regime did not use them."

A recent poll shows Bush's approval rating has risen to 71 percent since the war began, but this is no reason for Bush to be complacent. Eighty-eight percent of those polled wanted clear evidence that Iraq was lying to the UN inspectors. Military success should not be confused with giving the coalition the legitimacy to invade Iraq.

Choc-Nut memories

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

AT A SURPRISE birthday party for our friend Guido Delgado, film director and self-designated "National Pornographer," Joey Reyes began talking about a dinner party he had attended some nights before. He waxed eloquent about the innovative touches the chef brought to the meal, including squares of white Laguna cheese topped with olives and herbs, over which olive oil was drizzled. This led me to remember a dessert I had, in fact, over a decade ago but which remains fresh in my palate's memory. It was deep fried Laguna cheese served with cranberry sauce on the side, the sweet tartness of the sauce contrasting with the creamy blandness of the cheese. A friend would later tell me it was a Pinoy variation on a classic dessert made from mozzarella. I've hankered for another taste since, but so far have remained frustrated.

In the middle of our raves, writer and curator Marian Pastor Roces complained that she could hardly taste the food so excellently catered by Barbara's. "I'm trying to imagine how the dishes you're describing would taste like, and it's clashing with the flavors in my mouth!" she wailed.

This of course made us pause only momentarily in our collective recollection of memorable food experiences and recent discoveries. Unlike Marian, the rest of us found that talking about food while indulging in it only enhanced the sensory festival.

* * *

ONE of Joey's biggest finds was the unbelievable concoction he called "Choc-Nut ice cream" that's a popular dessert at the newly opened Uva in Greenbelt 2. The rest of us, all of us in our 40s (at least), were immediately transported back to our childhoods, remembering the nutty-chocolatey goodness of those crumbly bars that I best recall savoring by biting off a huge chunk and letting it stay on my tongue till it melted.

"It's difficult enough to find Choc-Nut in stores today, let alone in ice cream!" Marian exclaimed, while the rest of us went off on Choc-Nut tangents, recalling other childhood favorites: Fat & Thin red champoy, moist haw flakes, Serge chocolates, tira-tira, belekoy and dirty ice cream sold by itinerant vendors pushing colorful carts and signaling their arrival with a hand bell.

Apparently, so persuasive were Joey's descriptive powers that after Guido's party wound down, the whole caboodle moved the party to Makati (with Mario Taguiwalo even detouring to fetch wife Beulah so she could share in the experience) and there invaded Uva just for the Choc-Nut ice cream.

I had to leave early to fetch my daughter who was in another party, but if I had gotten wind of their plans, I would probably have joined the outing to Greenbelt. But as it happened, completely ignorant of the previous night's sortie, my daughter and I happened to be in the Greenbelt area come lunchtime the next day, and with Joey's raves still ringing in my ears, decided it had to be Uva for lunch.

* * *

JUST to make sure, I ordered the Choc-Nut ice cream as soon as I was seated, only to be told by the waiter that it wasn't available because they had run out of it the night before (Joey and Co. surely had something to do with it!). When I wailed that the ice cream was the only reason I had come to Uva, the waiter said he would see what he could do, because there was ice cream, after all, only they weren't sure if it was frozen enough to serve.

With our meal over, the ice cream made its appearance (with profuse expressions of gratitude from me), three huge scoops of home-made mantecado ice cream sprinkled with bits of crumbled Choc-Nut in a big earthen bowl. My daughter smiled as I groaned with pleasure, the rich mantecado flavor giving way to Choc-Nut's nutty goodness, but even she was soon won over the second she dipped into the bowl.

And that's how we marked the start of Holy Week, indulging in the sinful pleasure of delighting our palates, perhaps as a way of building up taste memories in preparation for a week of denial. Then again, bacalao is in our Good Friday menu, so that's something to look forward to!

* * *

YOU have until today to register for the "Christian Liberation Retreat for Gays and Lesbians" on Good Friday at the St. Aelred Monastery in Quezon City.

So far, writes Fr. Richard Micklin, people from as far as Saudi Arabia and Cavite have registered for the retreat which starts at 9 a.m. this Good Friday. Organizers request all participants to contact them as soon as possible to reserve space for yourselves and your friends so that meals, snacks and materials can be prepared.

St. Aelred Monastery can be found at 53-A Mapang-akit Street, Barangay Pinyahan, Quezon City. The retreat is for free.

To make a reservation, you can call Father Richard or Simon at 433-7277, send e-mail to st_aelred@hotmail.com or text 0920-903-4909.

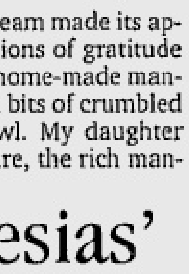
How to get to St. Aelred: By commuting: Get any bus ride going to Fairview, alight on Mapagmahal Street between JAC Bus Liner station and Gold Condominium (where the DILG is). Take a yellow tricycle for P8 and get yourself to 53-A Mapang-akit. Alternately, get off the MRT at the Kamuning Station, walk to GMA-7, cross Timog and get a jeepney going to V. Luna. The jeep will cross Edsa, drive up East Avenue, make a right on Matapang, turn back along Mapang-akit and as it goes left on V. Luna Road, get off and walk the rest of Mapang-akit until you find a red gate with a picture of Jesus and Mary.

The place is also accessible from Quezon City Hall—get on a jeepney going to Anonas. As it drives up V. Luna, get off at Mapang-akit when you see the Hairline Beauty Salon and Trinidad Hardware. Walk right until you find the red gate described above.

'Visitas iglesias'

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo



TOMORROW night I will be dragged off to the annual *visita iglesia* again. It's not one of my favorite Holy Week rituals because of the heat and the logistics of searching for seven interesting churches in the city. I go for the company, which is not the correct motivation, and the hope that I find a flash of enlightenment in the most obscure or everyday place.

Once, I asked aloud if it were possible to clock in all the churches I visit outside Holy Week because this would add up to triple the required number. Observant friends replied that one does not accumulate credits and interest as in a bank account. They noted that I visit churches for my work—historical churches like Barasoain or Malolos—or for pleasure—visiting the ancient churches of Bohol, or the Laguna loop to marvel at colonial art or mourn its loss due to robbery or the well-meaning beautification projects of the parish priest. Because of my non-religious motivation all these church visits do not count, even if I pray in them for awhile. There must be some merit in doing something for the soul at least once a year.

My recent pilgrimage to Barasoain and Malolos was non-religious. It was basically an attempt to imagine what these churches were like when Malolos was the short-lived capital of the Philippines. Emilio Aguinaldo used the Malolos *convento* as his residence and what we know now as the Malolos Congress had their sessions in nearby Barasoain Church. Each time I see Foreign Secretary Blas Ople on the news, I notice that he proudly hangs in his office framed photographs of Malolos at the time of the First Philippine Republic.

I wonder where he got his prints, but in the Heroes Hall on the ground floor of Malacañang there used to be blow-ups of the members of Congress walking from Malolos to Barasoain in their coats and silk top hats. With all these faded sepia images in mind, I walked around Malolos and Barasoain and tried vainly to picture the place without the tricycles and the electric posts. Maybe I edited it out of my own memory but I cannot recall if the golden arches of McDonald's have already changed the landscape there. If I comment sourly on it, some smart aleck will say that the bright yellow "M" stands for Malolos, not McDonald's.

In the memoirs of Jose Alejandrino, he relates the drafting of the Malolos Constitution and the heated debates regarding the separation of Church and State, the expulsion of the religious orders and the prohibition against the establishment of new religious orders. The Malolos Congress was split over these provisions and despite all the debates, no call for voting was made because both sides worried about the result. Antonio Luna, who was identified with the so-called "radical" faction pushing for the separation of Church and State, planned a trick. Alejandrino wrote:

"[Luna] assembled all those delegates of the radical faction...advising them to keep away from sessions of the Congress but requesting them to remain within call at a moment's notice. With the radicals absent, the Conservatives constituted a majority during the sessions. Having made a careful counting and thinking themselves sure of victory, the Conservatives asked for a vote while the few radicals present registered a token opposition. The motion to call a vote was carried. Then at the precise moment of balloting, Luna immediately called all his adherents to enter the session hall en masse to the surprise of the confident Conservatives. The voting was taken and we [illegible] I remember right [illegible] this manner the provision in our Constitution for the separation of Church and State was secured."

Holy Week made me reflect on the anti-friar bent in our history and made me see that people did not throw out the baby with the bath water. There was a religiosity made deeper by the horrors of the military campaigns. On Nov. 16, 1896 the enemy was repelled in Binakayan and Novelta, Cavite and a certain B. Buhay sent the following circular:

"In gratitude to the help extended to our Katipunan by the Blessed Mother of God, whose perpetual succour we have felt in trying to achieve our Liberty (Kalayaan), please command your Brothers of the Katipunan under your jurisdiction to tell the townspeople to recite the Holy Rosary at all hours. Ask them to implore the help of the Holy Mother and of her Child to redeem us from the bondage of slavery and to take us under the mantle of grace. For three consecutive nights ask the Brothers under your jurisdiction to pray that the enemy may abandon their contemptible conduct and that they face God and the mercy of heaven. Thus, the freedom which we have been able to hold so far may be ours forever.

"Please try to fulfill the order I gave last week with regard to the reinforcement of the camps and inform us of its compliance."

On Jan. 15, 1897 Baldomero Aguinaldo issued a similar order:

"Please order the people, especially the women, to make novenas. Ask those in care of the barrios to be strict in carrying out this order, because we must understand that our prayers to Almighty God are really powerful weapons against our enemies."

The Philippine Revolution was anti-friar but not anti-church, and it amuses me to think that the Filipinos asked God's help against the Spaniards who surely asked the same against the Filipinos.

* * *

[illegible] aocampo@ateneo.edu

Letting go

HIGH BLOOD

Vilma Regidor Taroy

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

DESPITE being afflicted with kyphosis (an abnormal backward curvature of the spine resulting in a hump) and scoliosis (a lateral curvature of the spine) my mother welcomed each day as a miracle. She migrated to the United States to stay with my two sisters and eventually petitioned four of my younger siblings. After spending some time as "baby sitter" to her grandchildren, she joined a senior citizens group. A former public school teacher, she volunteered to teach English to other senior members. She emceed programs and recited poems for birthday celebrators. She joined tour groups. Occasionally, she played in the casino.

I believe, however, that life for our mother blossomed when she was in her 80s. She enrolled in art classes and learned the craft of pressed flower arrangement. And for almost 10 years, friends and relatives alike eagerly waited to receive the "picture flowers" which she lovingly and artistically created on greeting cards. She wrote poems and essays. She subscribed to magazines and ordered books. She read voraciously. She always looked forward to the baseball season, staying up late rooting for the Yankees. She also busied herself writing to friends, and she was so proud of her penmanship.

In June 1995 she was a shy and trembling bride as she clutched my father's arm during their 60th wedding anniversary. How grateful she was when my uncle, her younger brother who is a priest, came to officiate at the occasion. During the reception, excitement and joy were written all over her face as she waltzed with my father in short measured steps, sang, recited a poem she composed and acknowledged the presence of her guests.

And in November 1995 when she was 82, she started writing her autobiography in clear, precise strokes, her grammar almost perfect.

And life moved on for all of us. Across the miles her letters came almost monthly. I called her up almost weekly. I was lulled into thinking that she would be blessed with added years.

In July last year we received the sad news that she had a stroke and was now bedridden.

Aboard KE Flight 085 we landed once again at the JFK International Airport on Aug. 11, 2002. Our mother was at home having been discharged from the hospital two weeks ago. Oh, how she had changed! Her hearty laughter that usually greeted our arrival was now a forced and wan smile. The familiar twinkle in her eyes was now a stare that mirrored her pain and her confusion. She looked at us—my husband, my sister and I—and recognized us. I felt that that look mirrored both joy and gratitude because despite the distance and the difficulties, we made time to see her. She then asked for Boy, our brother, who was left behind working for his visa. I hugged her and kissed her and she reciprocated with a firm grip of my hand. That night I asked God to give her the grace to be her usual self once again.

For two straight nights after our arrival I stayed with her. It was the least I could do to make up for all those long lost years that we were apart. Deep into the night we talked in hushed tones and reminisced about a lot of things. She told me to fix her things—her scrapbooks, her photo albums. She even gave me her lotto numbers! And like a small child she asked me to massage her back, arms and legs. At times she fell asleep. How sad that our roles were now reversed!

More than 60 years earlier she brought us to this world, all 10 of us (one died in infancy), assisted only by a local midwife. Just like a regular, rhythmical pattern we came—a baby every two years. And she was always there for us as we took our first steps, scraped our knees, had bumps, lumps, mumps, lost a tooth to the fairy, etc.

In the afternoon of Aug. 15 she had a seizure. Her cheeks twitched. Her eyes rolled to one side. My husband insisted that we take her to the hospital. My sister called up 911. In a few minutes an ambulance screeched to a halt in front of the house. She was taken to Queens General Hospital, the nearest to our place.

On earlier visits with her, my mother kept reminding me that she preferred to go back home to our province than be placed in a nursing home.

The idea of bringing our mother to a nursing home was now creating tension among us. Finally we agreed to have her stay temporarily at the Trump Pavilion which was just a stone's throw away from the Jamaica Hospital, where my sister works as a nurse, and eventually bring her home once we found somebody to take care of her.

Every day my husband and I heard Mass at the St. Nicholas of Tolentine Church which was just a 15-minute walk away. And every day I prayed the novena to the Divine Mercy and begged for guidance, enlightenment and forgiveness. It seemed to me that our mother, despite her aches and suffering, was holding on and just wouldn't let go.

In two weeks her condition worsened. Pneumonia had set in. She also had a urinary tract infection. She could not talk nor could she eat. She was being fed through NGT (naso-gastric tube) and later through a PEG (percutaneous endoscopic gastronomy). Laboratory tests revealed a mass in her brain that may have caused the seizures. But an operation at this stage in her life was simply ruled out.

On Sept. 10 I arrived at the hospital at around 9:30 a.m. I found her breathing softly, an oxygen mask covering her face, her eyes unblinking and staring into space. I wiped the tiny beads of perspiration on her forehead. I noticed that she was cold. After reciting the prayers in her prayer book, I bent over her and whispered, "Mama, this is Vilma. I'm here beside you. I know you are in great pain. If you are ready and God wants to take you, please go. Do not worry about us. Boy cannot come to see you. If you can hear me, please press my hand." I felt goose pimples all over me as she responded with one gentle, tender squeeze of my hand.

Then I sat on a chair beside her bed. I picked up the New York Post and started reading first-person accounts and interviews of survivors of the 9/11 incident, tales of heroism of the firefighters, schedule of activities to commemorate the incident, etc. And then I dozed off.

Up to now I cannot exactly tell how long I slept. When I woke up I saw my mother still staring into nothingness. But I could not hear any sound of her breathing. I called her and shook her but she simply lay on her bed pale, cold and lifeless.

The tears that streamed down my face were a mixture of guilt and gratitude. Guilt because "I slept on the job" and gratitude because God in His wisdom and mercy had taken her away from us, putting an end to her suffering. In the peace and quiet of a hospital room, not in a nursing home, she let go of me, of all of us. Ever the caring and loving mother, she tiptoed in silence and walked safely home to her Creator.

Vilma Regidor Taroy, 66, is a retired principal of the Legarda Elementary School

No more discussion needed on General Santos land case

AS the legal adviser of former Environment Secretary Heherson T. Alvarez, I am minded to respond to the letter of Juliano Nacino, director for legal services of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, (PDI, 4/11/03) to put in proper context the issues involved in the Alcantara land controversy.

To begin with, it should have been current Environment Secretary Elisea Gozun who should have answered Alvarez's letter of April 3 because it was her act that was challenged therein. Obviously, she is not confident of her stand that she had to seek help from legal services.

Having said that, let me state the following facts:

1. The questioned order of Alvarez was made pursuant to the writ of execution issued by the Commission on Settlement of Land Problems (Coslap) directing him to enforce the Coslap decision of Aug. 3, 1998.

2. The judgment of Coslap recommended *inter alia*, the cancellation of Nicasio Alcantara's FLGLA 542 over 923 hectares of land in General Santos City and its restoration to the B'laans.

3. The Coslap decision was first affirmed in toto by the Court of Appeals on June 22, 2002, and eventually by the Supreme Court on July 20, 2001 when it threw out Alcantara's appeal.

4. The Supreme Court decision having become final and executory, an entry of judgment thereof was made on Oct. 20, 2001.

5. On July 29, 2002 the Coslap issued the writ of execution directing Alvarez to enforce its judgment.

6. On Aug. 15, 2002 Alvarez issued his first questioned order canceling Alcantara's FLGLA 542, and on Nov. 22 his memorandum directing the CENR office of General Santos City to implement the four recommendations of Coslap.

In plain terms, the whole Alcantara land controversy went through the entire gamut of administrative/quasi-judicial/judicial proceedings. So, what denial of due process are the Alcantaras and/or Gozun talking about?

Alvarez merely implemented a final and executory judgment that was affirmed by no less than the Supreme Court.

The suspension by Gozun of the implementation of the Alvarez orders is not only devoid of factual and legal basis, but patently dilatory because there is nothing more to be done but to enforce a final and executory judgment.

There is nobody, local or national, and certainly not the environment secretary, who can undo the final verdict of the Supreme Court.

The claim of Gozun in her suspension order that there were so-called "certain irregularities" or "procedural defects" in Alvarez's implementation of the final Coslap/Supreme Court judgment because he did not wait for 15 days before implementing, is borne out of ignorance of the rules of procedure. The 15-day waiting period applies only to decisions, not to writs of execution. In other words, once a writ of execution is issued, the same can be implemented within 24 hours, not after the lapse of 15 days. And Alvarez was precisely enforcing the writ of execution issued by the Coslap of a judgment that had become final and executory as far back as Oct. 20, 2001.

One final note. In its judgment affirming the Coslap decision, the Supreme Court not only ruled that the subject land belongs to the B'laans, but also pointedly declared that the grant to Alcantara of FLGLA 542 covering the disputed 923 hectares of land, "violated Section 1 of Presidential Decree No. 410." In other words, Alcantara's FLGLA 542 is null and void from the start for being unlawfully granted.

So, why does Alcantara insist on holding on to the property? Especially since the Alcantara clan already controls more than 7,000 hectares or about 12 percent of the total of land area of General Santos.

That is why in his answer to the complaint of the Alcantaras in the Ombudsman, Alvarez asserted that the Alcantaras should return to the government or give to the B'laans all the riches they have extracted from the vast track of public land they have for so long used and exploited in violation of the law. He also asked the graft body to investigate how and why one family could have acquired excessive landholdings with countless of our countrymen being landless.

This cannot but validate the talk circulating that the Alacantaras are out to convert the land it supposedly leased from the government into a profitable upscale subdivision.

—EDDIE TAMONDONG
Tamondong Fragante Pooten and Associates, Rm. 801 GLC Bldg.,
T.M. Kalaw corner
A. Mabini Streets,
Ermita, Manila

Deadly wall in Ayala tunnel

LAST APRIL 14, 2003, another life was lost in the Ayala tunnel. The structure inside the tunnel appears to have been designed as a yawning graveyard ready to snatch more lives.

First, the lighting inside the tunnel is so dim in spite of the presence of two structural walls (yes, walls!). Second, there is practically no barrier that will serve as an advance warning to prevent motorists (especially new users of the tunnel) from slamming into the two structural walls. Luminous paint and some reflectorized warning gadgets just aren't enough to alert motorists of the presence of the wall structures found right inside the dimly lighted tunnel.

We don't need a highly intelligent public works engineer to envision some sort of a barrier to help prevent motorists form slamming into the tunnel walls.

—VOLTAIRE O. ALFONSO,
Vista Verde
Executive Village,
Cainta, Rizal

Educational legislation initiatives

I WOULD like to thank Andrea Echavez for writing about one of the laws I have authored, the Early Childhood Care and Development Act, which appeared in the INQUIRER's April 7 issue.

This law mandates government-subsidized socio-economic and educational aid for children 6 years old and below and aims to establish Montessori-type preschool facilities for them.

With education being my utmost legislative priority, I have also authored Republic Act No. 9155 or the Governance of Basic Education Act, which paves the way for sweeping reforms in our public school system. I am also pushing the expansion of the Government Assistance to Students and Teachers in Private Education (Gastpe), and the swift passage of my "Hot Meals for Hungry Learners" program, a national school-feeding initiative, to help wipe out malnutrition among our schoolchildren.

Through our modest efforts, 353 scholars have benefited so far from my scholarship program, and 1,767 teachers have honed their computer skills under my TAO-CARES project.

I have also donated so far 117 Internet-ready computers to various public schools nationwide and P2 million worth of books to public libraries across the country as part of my continuing efforts, besides the ECCD, to help upgrade the quality of Philippine education.

Once again, I thank Echavez for her enlightening article about the ECCD.

—SEN. TERESA AQUINO-ORETA,
Rm. 511, GSIS Bldg.,
Financial Center,
Roxas Boulevard,
Pasay City

A bit of Ilocos history

VISITING History Town Philippines in Intramuros was like getting a glimpse of the past. Aside from witnessing a drama on how Princess Urduja ruled her people, I read from various travel advisory flyers that there existed an extensive region renowned for its gold mines. Merchants from Japan and China came to visit the area of the Samtoys (from *sao mi toy* which literally means "our language") to trade gold with beads, ceramics and silk.

The Spanish explorers had their exciting adventures covering what is now known as Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, Abra and La Union.

On June 13, 1572, Juan de Salcedo, Legaspi's grandson, volunteered to explore parts of the Philippines. With eight armed boats and only 45 determined men with him, Salcedo who was then 22 years old, headed to the north. Salcedo landed in Vigan (Bigan before) and proceeded toward Laoag, Currimao and Badoc. The crew saw numerous sheltered coves (*looc*) where the locals made their homes and called the region Ylocos and its people Ylocanos.

Salcedo made Vigan the capital of his *encomienda* (fiefdom) covering Northwestern Luzon. Later, Vigan by virtue of a Royal Decree issued by King Ferdinand VI, was elevated to a city named Ciudad Fernandina de Vigan. For three centuries Vigan was the center of political, social and cultural activities. Today, the city is one of the five Unesco World Heritage Sites in the country. Vigan is the best preserved example of a planned Spanish town in Asia. Its architecture is a mixture of Philippine, Chinese and European cultural elements.

Region I, composed of Pangasinan, La Union, Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte, has an uneven history. The Ilocanos knew how to fight for their rights. We have the Dingras uprising (1589), the revolt led by Pedro Almasan (San Nicolas, 1660), Diego Silang (1762), and Gabriela Silang who was captured and hanged. In 1807, the *basi* (from sugarcane) brewers of Piddig, protested the government's monopoly of the wine industry.

In an effort to gain more political control, Spain split the Samtoy legend into Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union and Abra.

For those who missed out the Region I presentations, you also missed the native delicacies such as *bagnet* (*chicharon*), *biscocho* (crackers), *corniks* (corn kernels), *empanada* (filled pastry), *linga* (sesame seeds), *longganiza* (sausage), *tupig* (sticky rice), and above all, the free sampling of *basi*.

Well, as they say in Region I, "*Naimbag nga rabii yo, Apo. Dios ti aguina* (Good evening. Thank you)."

—DR. SAMUEL P. FERNANDEZ,
Polytechnic University
of the Philippines,
Sta. Mesa, Manila

Asphalt overlay on good concrete road

I AM one of the many Filipinos who sought employment outside the country and I'm now residing in Singapore.

However, in my recent visit to Leyte, I noted the following:

They are now asphalting roads (overlay) on good concrete roads along the towns of Tunga through Carigara. And this I can never understand. Why? Because the concrete roads of these newly asphalted roads (except a few hundred meters) are still good concrete roads!

And this is true also in Samar (although there, I was informed, the concrete roads have now been badly damaged due to the use of inferior gravel).

And I hasten therefore to write to you because I am sure that in three to five years, this asphalt overlay would turn the once-concrete good highways to bumpy asphalt roads. That's almost a sure thing in three to five years!

This brings to mind a statement of a former Leyte congressman who, when asked by close friends why he never bothered to cement the roads from Baybay to Matalom during his term (fifth district), he bluntly said, "How can I allocate money for the maintenance gravel if I cemented the roads?"

Is this the congressman's way of maneuvering for maintenance money and kickbacks on the side?

I may be in a foreign place already, but I still do love my birthplace.

—ESTEBAN E. MACARIGSON,
Singapore

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Kuwait battles isolation due to Arab anger

NEWS ANALYSIS

Esmat Salaheddin

KUWAIT—"When you feel nobody loves you, nobody cares for you and everyone is ignoring you, you should start asking yourself: Am I Kuwaiti?"

So runs a popular mobile phone text message in Kuwait, focus of hostile sentiment around the Arab world because of its role as the main launch pad for the US and British invasion of Iraq.

Kuwaiti newspapers and official statements complain about what they call the rude behavior of fellow Arabs toward their wealthy country, owner of a tenth of the world's oil reserves.

Kuwaitis fear a reopening of the inter-Arab rifts that followed Iraq's 1990-91 occupation of their country and disrupted its carefully cultivated network of diplomatic alliances.

"There is complete Arab hatred toward Kuwaitis," executive Adel Marafi told Reuters. "They (Arabs) envy us. They want everyone to be poor and living under a tyrannical regime." Many Kuwaitis dismiss the protests as lacking authority, saying they come from Arabs who have not had the unhappy experience of living, as many Kuwaitis did during the occupation, under the rule of Saddam Hussein.

But still the criticism touches a nerve. Intellectuals blame journalists steeped into anti-Gulf Arab prejudice for inciting the man on the street against their country.

"Arab media is against the war, inciting the Arab street against the Americans and any one who helps them," said Yassin al-Yassin, deputy editor in chief of the daily English-language Kuwait Times, addressing a discussion group of professionals.

"The official relations between Kuwait and Arab states have not been affected by the war in Iraq—but anger is at the popular level," said one analyst, who declined to be named.

The anger of the Kuwaitis stems partly from the fact that over the decades their government has given $7.5 billion in development aid to less wealthy Arab and Islamic countries and billions more in less-publicized support for political causes.

Saddam was once a key beneficiary of the latter category, especially during his 1980-88 war with Iran when Gulf Arab states like Kuwait feared the Islamic revolution would export Shi'ite Muslim rebellion to the western side of the waterway.

Altruism has normally paid diplomatic dividends for Kuwaitis, who number just 900,000 out of the total 2.3 million population—the rest being Arab and Asian guest workers.

Kuwaitis say their tiny country, half the size of Switzerland, needs friends in the wider world, partly because of its vulnerable location hemmed in between three much larger neighbors—Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia—in a volatile region.

Its instinct to use its wealth to build alliances is shared by the other sparsely populated Gulf Arab states whose affluent lifestyle is the envy of many in the wider Arab world.

Arab nationalism, support for the Palestinian cause and more recently various forms of Islamist humanitarianism have helped anchor Kuwait in the politics of the region.

In 1948, popular committees were formed in the country to help the Arab cause in the war that led to the establishment of Israel. The main faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was planned here in 1963. Kuwaitis are big donors to Islamic charities that work around the world.

But Iraq's invasion shattered any illusion that Kuwaiti largesse could always cement international friendships.

To add insult to injury, as Kuwaitis see it, some Arab countries took Iraq's side as it wrangled with Washington over how to end the seven-month occupation.

Kuwait was a significant financial and political backer of Jordan until the invasion. It later cut off aid to Jordan for siding with Iraq.

Kuwait's relationship with Iraq has long been delicate.

A week after Kuwait became independent from Britain in 1961, Iraqi prime minister Abdul-Karim Qassem announced Iraq's territorial claim to the country and deployed forces on the border. Britain announced it was sending forces to help Kuwait and Iraqi forces later withdrew.

One month later Kuwait was admitted to the Arab League and League forces replaced British troops in Kuwait.

Kuwaitis now say the example of a free Iraq may help them rebuild Arab ties if and when ordinary Iraqis show some recognition that Kuwait helped them regain their freedom.

They point to the example of Saudi Arabia in 1991.

"The Iraqi people can break this isolation after it is freed because it will silence many tongues," former Kuwaiti information minister Saad al-Ajmi told Reuters.

"Kuwaitis' position is different from the position of all world countries," said Ajmi. "It's a moral one." "How can they support a US-led coalition to liberate their country, and not support a similar one to liberate the Iraqis?"

He was referring to the liberation of Kuwait in the 1991 Gulf War, in which US-led coalition forces marched from Saudi Arabia and pushed Iraqi forces out of the country.

"The Iraqis would be as grateful to us as we have been to the Saudis," Ajmi said. *Reuters*

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Looted Baghdad treasures feared lost

WASHINGTON—Antiquities experts, dismayed that US officials failed to heed their warnings to protect Baghdad's historic artifacts during the war, said on Monday they were concerned the priceless treasures looted from Iraq's main museum may never be recovered.

US archeological organizations and the UN's cultural agency Unesco said they had provided US officials with information about Iraq's cultural heritage and archeological sites months before the war began.

University of Chicago professor McGuire Gibson was among a group that met Pentagon officials several times and presented them with a list of archeological and other sites that should be protected, particularly the Iraqi National Museum in Baghdad.

"We warned them about looting at the very beginning," said the archeologist who has worked extensively in the region. "I was assured it would be secured."

Now, he said, the loss was immeasurable.

"The Baghdad museum is the equivalent of the Cairo Museum.

It would be like having American soldiers 200 feet outside the Cairo museum watching people carry away treasures from King Tut's tomb or carting away mummies," said Gibson.

The museum, which housed key artifacts of ancient Mesopotamia, which was among the earliest civilizations, was ransacked and its contents taken or destroyed in a wave of looting that has swept the Iraqi capital since the collapse of President Saddam Hussein's rule last week.

Unesco's deputy director, Mounir Bouchenaki, said on Monday leading archeologists will meet in Paris on Thursday to seek ways to rescue Iraq's cultural heritage. They also plan a fact-finding mission to Iraq.

The US State Department said in a statement on Monday that people handling the looted artifacts would be liable to prosecution under Iraqi and US laws.

The US military in Iraq has instructions to protect antiquities and a US official, John Limbert, will take the lead in efforts to recover the objects, the statement said.

Sumer in southern Iraq was the home of the first known civilization and the first writing, in the late fourth millennium BCE. Subsequent Mesopotamian civilizations built the major cities of Nineveh, Nimrud and Babylon.

Gibson likened the museum's destruction to that of the famed library founded by Alexander the Great in Egypt that was destroyed more than two thousand years ago.

US Secretary of State Colin Powell told reporters the United States was concerned about the looting at the museum and was working to secure the facility.

"The United States understands its obligations and will be taking a leading role with respect to antiquities in general but this museum in particular," he said.

Powell said the US would work with Unesco, which earlier urged the US and Britain to take immediate steps to protect and preserve a heritage considered to be "one of the richest in the world." *Reuters*

BRITISH Military Police (left to right) Cpl. Gwen Hatton, Lance Cpl. Tammy Wickett and Cpl. Joe Richardson, shown posing in Al Amara, central Iraq, April 14, are part of an operation to bring law and order to the city near the border with Iraq.

AP

What happened to Saddam? Hunt still on as last bastion falls

BAGHDAD—The US general who led the war to topple him talks about DNA analysis.

A resident of the upmarket Baghdad district of Mansur says he saw him there three days before a US air strike obliterated a house where he was thought to be holding a meeting.

A former Army officer says he saw him and his two sons in front of a mosque in north Baghdad just four days ago.

But as US forces captured Saddam Hussein's hometown Tikrit on Monday, no one knows whether the deposed Iraqi leader is dead or alive.

Unable to watch television due to a power cut and with no local newspapers printed for a week, Baghdad residents are hungry for information about the fate of the man who ruled them for 24 years.

Rumors and reported sightings are widespread.

"We have to know what his fate was. He is wanted dead or alive," Ibtissam Ali, a 45-year-old social worker, said as he stared into a 15-meter-wide crater.

The US military, who have put an undisclosed price on Saddam's head, are also keen to know and have vowed to leave no stone unturned until they have the answers.

The crater is all that is left of the Mansur house that was bombed on April 7, following a tip that Saddam and his sons Qusay and Uday were meeting there.

US and British officials suspect Saddam escaped the strike. Neighbors say they saw Saddam's younger son and heir Qusay alive shortly after the strike.

One man, who would only give his name as Ali, said he had seen Saddam in Mansur district three days before the attack. He said many Iraqis wanted to be sure that Saddam's era was over.

"They are not scared," he said. "It is like a film. They want to see the end."

Mohanned al-Ajil, who described himself as a former Iraqi Army officer, said he saw Saddam and his sons four days ago outside a mosque in the Aadhamiya district of north Baghdad.

"He was talking with people. The people asked him how the Americans were able to enter Baghdad. He said: 'The closest people to me betrayed me,'" Ajil said.

One rumor doing the rounds on Monday suggested Qusay's body was in a Baghdad hospital. A doctor there dismissed the idea. "I wish his body was here. We want to get this over," he said. *Reuters*

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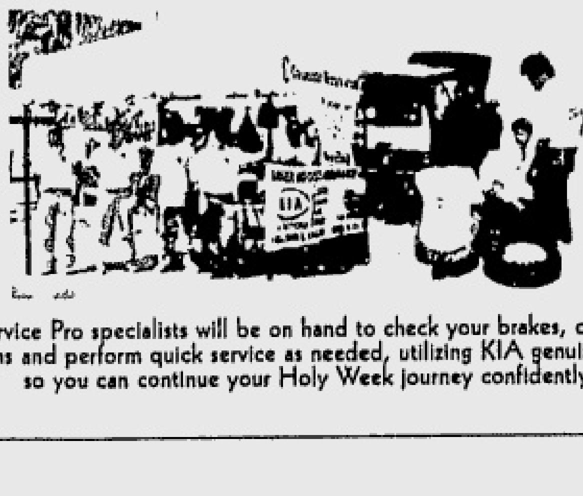

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Asia-Pacific airlines sounds 'Mayday' over SARS outbreak

SINGAPORE—A grouping of Asia-Pacific airlines on Tuesday urged governments to cut airport fees and other charges and consider providing war risk insurance to prevent the industry's collapse from the impact of the SARS health scare.

Richard Stirland, director general of the Association of Asia-Pacific Airlines (AAPA), called on other stakeholders in the aviation industry to share the burden currently borne by the airlines due to a sharp drop in travel.

"Airports and air traffic management services can and must reduce their charges, rents and other burdens which they impose on the airlines regardless of the fluctuations of the markets," he said in a statement received here.

Stirland said much of the infrastructure for global travel like airports, air traffic control, security, immigration, customs and quarantine authorities was both "government operated and monopoly providers of services."

"It is not just desirable but vital to the survival of the existing air transport industry that these entities share the financial consequences of SARS," he said.

Stirland said governments "should look again at state provision of war risk insurance and at security charges for both passengers and cargo being paid for out of general taxation, rather than by impositions on the airlines."

He cited US carriers which are receiving government assistance in the areas of insurance and security costs.

Airlines in the region are reeling from the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, which has claimed some 143 lives worldwide and infected than 3,200.

Bookings have plunged and airlines are drastically cutting flights as tourists and business travellers choose to stay home.

Stirland and AAPA's 17 member airlines have slashed about 650 flights a week in April, with some trimming up to 50 percent of frequencies.

"I expect airlines to cancel more flights if the situation does not get better," he warned.

Stirland called on aircraft manufacturers, fuel companies and ramp handling agencies, to "take a realistic look at prices and repayment terms in the light of the catastrophic situation." *AFP*

Gunmen open fire in New Orleans school; 1 killed

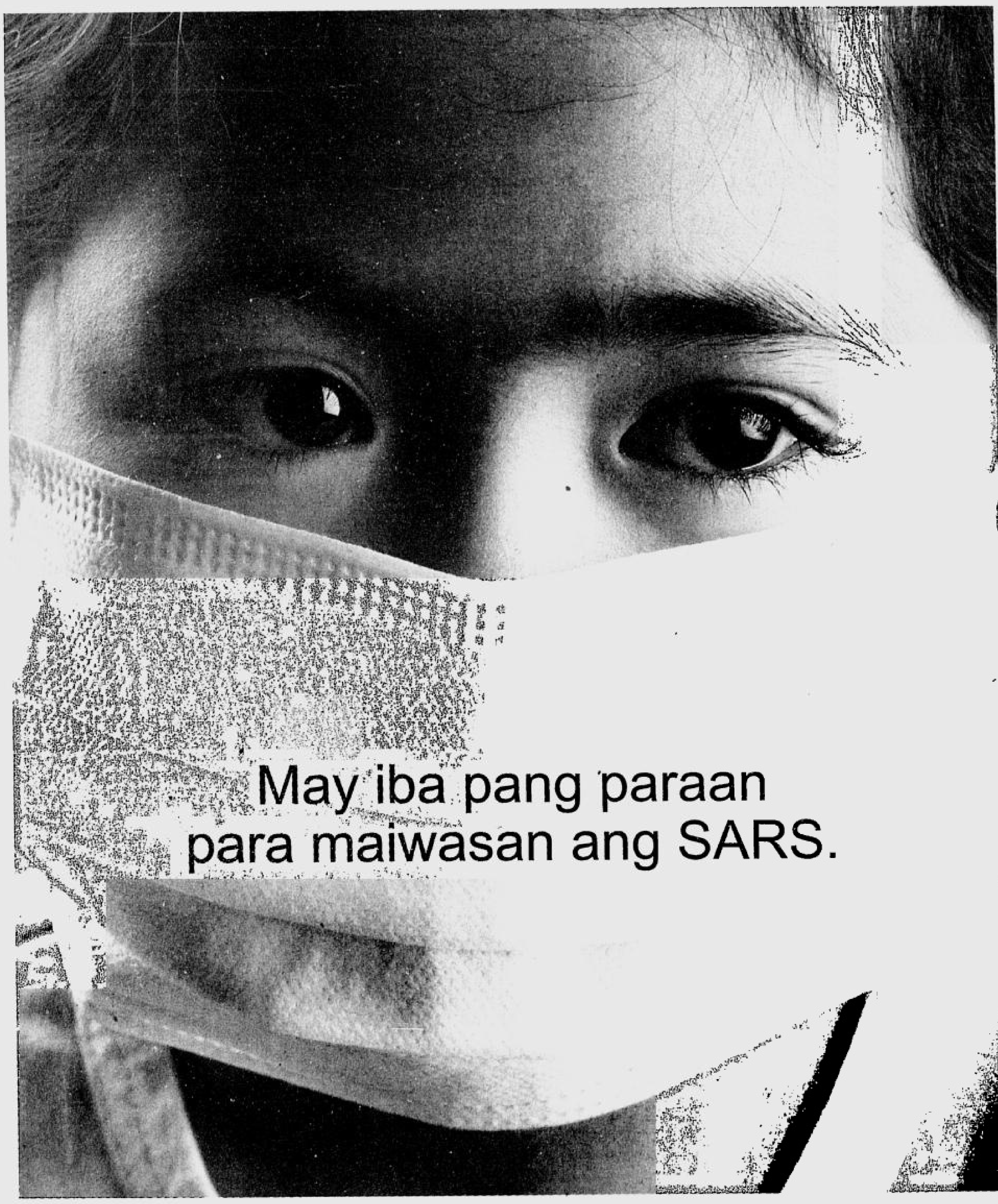
NEW ORLEANS—Gunmen armed with an AK-47 rifle and a handgun opened fire in a packed school gymnasium, killing a teenage boy and wounding three girls in a spray of 30 bullets that sent some 200 students scrambling for cover.

Four suspects were arrested Monday in a sweep of the neighborhood near John McDonogh High School, about a 1.6 km north of the French Quarter. Police said the shooting appeared to be retaliation for a killing on April 7. Students said the feud was apparently gang related.

At least 200 students were in the gymnasium when the suspects entered the building in search of the victim, 15-year-old Jonathan Williams, authorities said. He was apparently seated on the bleachers with other students when the gunmen confronted him. They shot repeatedly, striking the victim in the head and body and sending panicked students screaming.

"They started shooting and I started running," said ninth-grader Garick Jacob, who was in the gym when the shooting began. "I was really scared."

Tyrone Crump, 17, Herbert Everett, 18 and Michelle Fulton, 17, were all booked on first-degree murder charges. The fourth suspect arrested, Larry Moses, 19, allegedly hid the trio after the shooting and was booked as an accessory, police said. *AP*



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Timor rights trial branded as 'not honest'

JAKARTA—Amnesty International on Tuesday slammed Indonesia's trials of suspects in the 1999 East Timor violence as "not honest, truthful or fair" and urged the United Nations to consider setting up a tribunal.

The human rights group, in a report, reminded the UN of its responsibility to ensure that perpetrators of crimes against humanity before and after East Timor's bloody breakaway from Indonesia are brought to justice.

"The trials conducted by Indonesia have not been truthful, honest or fair," the London-based group said.

"It is now time for the UN to find alternative ways to ensure that justice is delivered in an effective and credible process."

Pro-Jakarta militiamen organized and directed by the Indonesian Army waged a campaign of intimidation before East Timorese voted in August 1999 for independence, and a scorched-earth revenge campaign afterwards.

At least 1,000 people are estimated to have died—Amnesty says 1,300—and whole towns were burnt to the ground.

Amnesty recalled that the UN Security Council and the UN Commission on Human Rights had demanded that offenders be brought to justice.

But the UN held off on an international tribunal following Indonesian assurances that it would try offenders itself.

A special human rights court, in widely criticized verdicts, has acquitted 10 security force members and a civilian.

Five people have been ordered jailed but only one has received the minimum 10-year sentence mandated by law. All are free pending appeals.

Two generals are still awaiting verdicts.

Amnesty said indictments were weak and failed to address the role of the Indonesian military in setting up and supporting the militias.

Most defendants were charged only with failing to prevent atrocities rather than direct hand in them.

Prosecutors were drawn from the attorney general's office, "which is widely acknowledged to be among the most corrupt of government departments." *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Why not war on poverty?

UNITED NATIONS—Declaring that "preemptive wars" are against international law, Germany's development minister demanded to know why the world can find billions of dollars for military battles and not millions to fight poverty—"the biggest enemy." "If there is a just war to be fought, it is the war on poverty and hunger, illness and disease, illiteracy and environmental degradation, exclusion and injustice," Economic Cooperation and Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul said Monday. A new World Bank report issued Sunday said global poverty can be cut in half by 2015 if rich countries lower trade barriers and increase foreign aid. But it said even if worldwide economic growth stays on track, poverty will rise in the Middle East and remain severe in Africa, where the number of poor is likely to climb from 315 million in 1999 to 404 million in 2015. *AP*

Quebec separatists lose

QUEBEC CITY—Quebec voters have told the rest of Canada and the world that the French-speaking province will not seek independence again, at least for the next few years. The Parti Quebecois, created to deliver sovereignty, suffered a major defeat Monday in its bid for a third straight term heading the provincial government. Almost complete results showed the Quebec Liberal Party led by Jean Charest had won a strong majority in the 125-member National Assembly legislature to form a new government. *AP*

Japan power shortage

TOKYO—An acute electricity shortage is looming large in Japan as power giant Tokyo Electric Power Co. (Tepco) completed the shutdown of all 17 of its nuclear reactors for emergency inspections on Tuesday. Tepco, the world's largest private power utility, stopped operations around 12:00 a.m. Tuesday at its last running nuclear reactor in Fukushima, 200 km northeast of Tokyo. Tepco has been forced to shut down all its nuclear reactors for emergency inspections after admitting to falsifying safety records at nuclear plants since the late 1980s. With the first halt to all its nuclear reactors since 1976, Tepco has lost 17.38 megawatts, or about 30 percent, of its power generating capacity. *AP*

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Cebu forms security groups to prevent attacks on churches

CEBU CITY—During this Holy Week, expect members of the PSG to check the bags and packages of anyone getting inside Catholic Churches in Cebu.

The PSG—Parish Security Groups—was organized jointly by the city government and the Cebu City Police Office (CCPO) from community-based volunteers to augment the local police force in ensuring that no untoward incident will happen during the Holy Week.

It was Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña who, on Monday, directed the PSG and the police to immediately start checking the bags of people going into churches and other venues for Holy Week religious activities.

The PSG system has been put in place and are ready to respond to any peace and order related problems within the vicinity of a church they were assigned to secure, according to Supt. Alexander Abadinas, Cebu City's acting police director.

Last Sunday, members of PSG underwent training provided by the CCPO on implementing security measures in different parishes. Among the steps they were set to undertake were the establishment of police assistance centers and package counters.

Parishioners were also advised to refrain from bringing large bags or packages during Masses.

The CCPO have also identified the Good Shepherd Parish in Banawa, Cogon Ramos and Pardo churches as where extra personnel will be deployed because of the volume of people attending ceremonies.

At least 42 police officers, including CCPO's Explosive and Ordinance Division Team, will be fielded to Cebu's ports.

The EOD team will also secure the well-attended "Sugat" (Easter Sunday celebration) in Minglanilla town, 16.4 km south of Cebu City.

The Cebu Provincial Police Office (CPPO), on the other hand, has also formed Task Group Igmat to secure the festivities of Bantayan Island in northern Cebu starting Tuesday until Saturday.

CPPO director Senior Supt. Maximo Calimlim said that group would prioritize prevention of potential insurgency attacks and secure vital installations in the north that are possible targets of terrorist groups. *Wilfredo Rodolfo III and King Cortel, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Abductions terrorize Davao Muslim community

DAVAO CITY—The reported abductions of Moro leaders here have instilled fear among the Muslim communities in the city that even attendance in daily prayers or "Sala" has decreased.

Datu Romy Umpar, president of the Davao Muslim Association, said from a high of 1,000 at the Ecoland mosque alone, the number of Muslim residents attending prayers after news about the abductions went around dropped to about 300.

Umpar said Muslims are now afraid to go out because they could become the next target of people suspected to be singling out Muslims who are being blamed for the recent bombings.

Right after the March 4 airport bombing, which killed at least 22 people, authorities invited for questioning several Muslim residents.

Even Kabacan, North Cotabato village officials Tirso Sudang and Undungan Sudang, who came to the city to collect the body of their relative Montasser, one of the victims in the explosions, were taken in for questioning.

Charged, jailed

They were later charged and spent more than a month inside the Maa Jail here.

But on Monday, the court ordered them released after finding no evidence that would link them to the explosion.

As this developed, armed men reportedly snatched another Muslim resident in Agdao District on Tuesday morning.

Ustadz Mahmod Adilao, a member of the influential Bishops-Ulama League, identified the victim as Muslimin Maro, 38, a resident of Mini-Forest in Barangay 23-C.

Adilao, an uncle of the victim's, said Maro had sent a text message to his friend Ali Sultan that he was being "picked up" by unidentified men who were asking him questions about the bombings at the Davao International Airport and Sasa Wharf.

Maro, the fourth Muslim to have involuntarily disappeared after the bombings, has not been seen since then.

On Thursday last week, Lajmar Jumdail, 38, and resident of Sirawan, Toril District was also snatched.

Witnesses said four armed men took him from his workplace along R. Castillo Street, Agdao around 4 p.m.

Two weeks ago, men wearing ski masks also forcibly took Datu Abdullah Sabdura Ala and Ustadz Zulkifle Alimuddin.

Police denial

Police officials said they have no hand in the "abductions."

Chief Supt. Isidro Lapeña, Southern Mindanao police chief, said the police and the military have not resorted to a gangland style of inviting suspects in an effort to pin down those responsible for the bombings.

He said "inviting officers" always wear uniforms and properly identify themselves during operations.

But the Muslims in the city believed the abductions were a form of persecution against them.

In a letter signed by at least 5,000 Muslim residents here, they expressed fears that Davao City was becoming a "laboratory" for anti-Muslim sentiments.

"Like in the days of old, are we to be isolated, ostracized, publicly ridiculed, condemned and judged without the mandatory trial and thereafter treated like common criminals, deprived of our constitutional rights and denied equal protection of the law?" the Muslims wrote in the letter addressed to Mayor Rodrigo Duterte.

As this developed, the military raided a predominantly Muslim village in Talomo District and invited a resident for questioning.

But Lt. Col. Agane Adriatico, spokesperson of the Task Force Davao, said the resident was later released for lack of evidence.

Cooperation

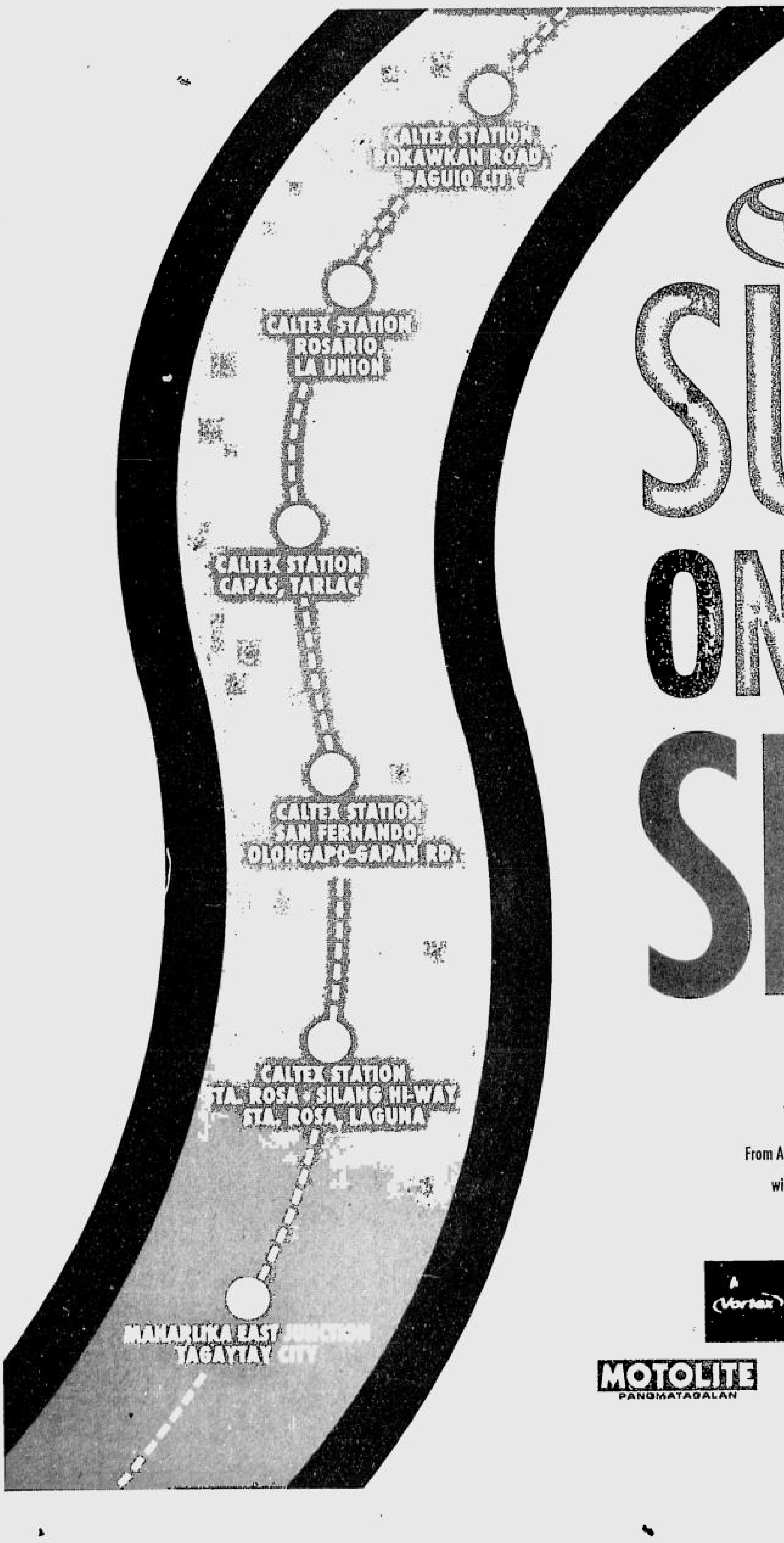
Meanwhile, Datu Zamzamin Ampatuan, executive director of the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA), urged Muslims to cooperate with the government in its effort to clamp down on terrorists.

In a recent dialogue with Muslims here, he also urged them to avoid blaming the government particularly on the reported abductions.

"We should know the facts first before we issue a statement," he said.

Ampatuan told Muslim leaders here to "get into the bottom of the circumstances and why these things were happening."

Muslims in Davao and other parts of Mindanao have also been active in protests against the US-led war on Iraq. The protests have been peaceful. *Anthony Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau*



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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Old, new traditions alive in Agoo

By Gia Damaso-Dumo
Agoo, La Union

EACH year during Holy Week, Agoo, La Union, draws thousands of Catholic faithful, including large numbers of *balikbayan*, who come to participate in the church-led *Semana Santa* activities. These activities are highlighted by a spectacular procession of religious images on Good Friday.

Interestingly, the much-anticipated procession has relatively modern beginnings traced to the late Jose Aspiras, former La Union lawmaker, tourism minister and press secretary.

He was credited for initiating and realizing the construction of the Shrine of Our Lady of Charity in 1978. So grand and ornate was this church that it was conferred the title minor basilica by Pope John Paul II only four years after its dedication.

Townsfolk say Aspiras had also commissioned in the mid-1980s the creation of more than two dozens of exquisitely crafted life-size tableaus or statuaries depicting the passion and death of Jesus Christ and individual statues of saints. All of these are mounted on ornately dressed *carozas* or floats during the Good Friday procession.

Stories

Like each tableau towed into the public gymnasium as early as Holy Monday to form the life-size "Stations of the Cross," the owners and stewards, called "*hermanos*" or "*hermanas*," of the images have their own stories to tell of how they began to take care of these images and how doing so has changed their lives.

Veneranda and Arnulfo Obungen Jr., children of retired judge Arnulfo Obungen, the original "*hermano*" of the tableau "Jesus Falls," said they have been overseeing the decorating of the tableau every year since the mid-1980s.

To their recollection, the plaster images and wooden float were crafted by an architect in Pampanga and paid for by the family of their uncle, Gen. Protacio Laroya, but have since been placed under their stewardship.

The Obungens usually hire three to four workers, including an electrician, and use about P10,000 to P12,000 worth of fresh flowers for the decoration and maintenance of the float during Holy Week.

Penitence

"It's worth it, it's part of our penitence. After everything is done, we feel fulfilled," Veneranda said. She added that the other "*hermanos*" and "*hermanas*" she knew have been blessed with relatively peaceful and comfortable lives like theirs, owing to their religious devotion.

Last year, 80-year-old Monica Estacio Austria could still manage to climb atop a stool to polish the wood and glass coffin containing the "Santo Entierro" or the dead Christ at the gym.

"I was only nine years old and I distinctly remember how, every Holy Week, it was like we were mourning for one of our own, but it was for the Santo Entierro. People would come to our house and sing the '*Pasyon*,'" she said.

Burned

However, after the family's original image was burned during the Japanese occupation, a new Santo Entierro, part of the set commissioned by Aspiras, was again given in their care, she recalled.

Like the Obungens, the Austrias see to it that the float is decked with flowers and repainted every Holy Week.

"We feel happy and very much contented (when we do this). Our children, although now busy with their own professions, have also grown up with a feeling of responsibility (for the Santo Entierro)," Austria said.

OCTOGENARIAN "steward" and assistant care for the Santo Entierro as if it was "one of their own."
GIA DAMASO-DUMO/PDI NORTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Personal touch

Teresita Tabora, wife of the former Agoo Mayor Camilo Tabora, personally designs her tableau "Calvary" differently each year. Last year, she added a modern touch to her decor by mounting a picture of a chalice and host at the tableau's foreground.

"These were among the first tableaus to be made. The whole set (of statuaries) was completed in about two years," she said. She also expressed the wish that, eventually, her family would be given the permanent stewardship of the "Calvary," an honor and tradition which she said she would pass on to her children.

Impressive statuaries

Other impressive statuaries that could be seen at the procession are the "Last Supper" with 13 finely carved figures in animated poses complete with a dinner table and motley props; "Jesus Talks to the Women of Jerusalem"; and "Triumphal Entry."

"It used to be that a parcel of the steward's land was reserved for the upkeep of the (images or statuaries). That parcel was called 'Talon ni Apo Dios' and all proceeds from it were used for the Apo as a gesture of devotion and thanksgiving," said Fr. Ignacio Asuncion, former parish priest of Agoo.

Demands

This scheme, however, did not hold out against the demands of practicality but it is reportedly still being practiced in other places such as Vigan City, he added.

Asuncion also observed that people—from as far as Benguet, the Ilocos and Manila—chose to come to the basilica to receive the sacrament of confession during the Lenten season.

According to church officials, spiritual privileges derive from the major basilica in Rome or Assisi with which the Agoo basilica is affiliated. Thus, on certain days, the faithful who visit the basilica minor may obtain some indulgences as if they had visited the major basilica.

Village in Nueva Ecija becomes Holy Week pilgrims' destination

By Anselmo Roque
Bongabon, Nueva Ecija

A VILLAGE in Bongabon, Nueva Ecija, which is home to two religious sects, is a pilgrims' destination especially during Holy Week.

The village, called Olivette, is described as the "New Jerusalem" by members of the religious sects "Adarna" and "Sambahan ng Amang Kaamaamahan at Inang Kaina-inahan" or SNAK-IK.

In 1926, a preacher, Francisco Balantac, of Barangay Bangorobong in San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte, set foot in one scarcely populated area of Bongabon "upon instructions of a mysterious voice." Elders here said Balantac named the village "Olivette" after he found olive trees in the area.

Tales say that Balantac named the area as such because of an inspiration from a Biblical passage that said in part: "Jesus was near Jerusalem at the hills of Mount of Olives and He could see the towns of Betfage and Bethany."

Curiously, a village named Bethania can be found near Olivette.

Olivette, 6 km from the Bongabon town proper, is at the foot of the Sierra Madre mountains. It has 12 caves that are mostly on top of the hills.

For almost three decades, residents of Bongabon and nearby towns called Olivette the home of the "Adarnistas," sect members who wear long flowing white gowns, called "*usong*," with wooden crosses dangling in their chests.

Later, another religious sect, the SNAK-IK, was established in the area.

To this day, not many people know much about the two religious sects and their beliefs and practices.

A search led the INQUIRER to a study of the two religious sects conducted several years back by former Nueva Ecija schools division supervisor Gertrudes Aquino.

Aquino used the study for her doctoral dissertation "Life in Olivette, a Religious Village in Nueva Ecija: A Case Study in Education and Culture."

'Demystified'

Aquino's study "demystified" Olivette and the two religious sects. The study said Adarna was organized and established by Candida Balantac on Jan. 26, 1918 in Ilocos Norte. Candida, who was called "Lola Adarna" by her followers, was believed to possess supernatural powers.

She was described by her followers as an *enkantadora* (enchanted lady) and a *manghuhula* (seer). She was said to have the ability to foretell calamities, sickness and locate missing objects, animals or persons.

They followed whatever she said without question. An example about the high regard for her by her followers was an incident where she asked the men and women members of marrying age to form two lines. She then asked each woman to select the man of her choice for a husband.

The tale went that an ugly woman chose the most handsome man in the village but the man did not complain as "it was the wish of Lola Adarna."

> They do the sign of the cross differently by touching seven points in the body—the shoulder, the head, the forehead, abdomen or womb, the left and right chest and the lips

It was not known why the sect was named Adarna. To many people, however, Adarna symbolizes the mythical bird "Adarna" in the epic poem "Florante at Laura" by poet Francisco "Balagtas" Baltazar.

Candida's younger brother, Feliciano, who was a captain during the war against the Spaniards in 1898, became the preacher of the sect. The sect had no written documents and its mission, doctrines and practices were transmitted to its members orally.

Aquino's study said Adarna's main objective is for "divine healing of the body, soul and mind through prayers, faith and sacrifices." The sect teaches that religion must be placed by the members above their economic and family interests.

In January 1926, Feliciano convinced his sister Candida to move to Olivette, which eventually became the main headquarters of the sect. Soon, several members opted to stay for good in Olivette.

The brother and sister, however, developed a rift and eventually separated. Feliciano, known as Ama Lakay, founded SNAK-IK and registered it with the Securities and Exchange Commission in 1951.

His own followers in Adarna joined him in the new sect while Lola Adarna's followers stayed with the original sect.

The two religious sects, based on Aquino's study, were not much different in their mission, doctrines, practices and rituals. Each has a supreme executive staff composed of the supreme head, secretary-general, treasurer, evangelist and missionaries.

The body of *banal na tagapangaral* (corps of preachers) is composed of priests, usually from the Philippine Independent Church and ministers from Protestant sects.

It has a set of *cantoras* (choir) and a group of security men called "Knights."

The patron saint of both sects is San Nicolas de Tolentino whose feast day is celebrated on Sept. 10.

While Adarna members are "liberal" in nature, SNAK-IK emphasizes strict obedience to the rules of the sect.

SNAK-IK requires its members to say the *kararag* (prayers) every morning and afternoon before the public altar at the quadrangle in the community.

Failure means expulsion.

Unlike other religious sects, Adarna and SNAK-IK existed in friendly terms in Olivette. The members of the two sects established their residences in agreed areas of the village.

Candida died at the age of 100 on Feb. 28, 1962 and her followers continued propagating the teachings of her sect. Feliciano died on July 6, 1957 and his remains were buried near the altar of his church.

Aquino's study said Feliciano also established branches of his church in Pangasinan, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Isabela, Tarlac, Benguet, Baguio City and in Metro Manila.

Rituals

The sects had their chapels standing close to each other. Their respective members follow the rules strictly in observing the Sabbath.

They go to church on Sundays and never work. Sometimes, they prepare their food a day before so they can concentrate on their church services.

They do the sign of the cross differently by touching seven points in the body—the shoulder, the head, the forehead, abdomen or womb, the left and right chest and the lips. Each part, according to members, has a particular religious meaning.

Sunday Mass is officiated by a priest, but if no priest is available, an assigned speaker does the prayers and the homily.

The wooden cross they wear was without the image of Christ because the members believed that the "suffering of Christ in the cross should not be overexposed."

After each Mass, the kissing of the hands of everyone is performed with solemnity "to promote love and respect for each other."

The young ones are baptized in two types of baptisms: by fire and by water.

In the altar of both churches, there is a painting of an "eye" which represents the "all-seeing God who watches over us." Below the "eye" are the paintings of seven angels.

A framed picture of Dr. Jose Rizal, who is venerated by members of both sects, the sects' respective flags and a painting of Jesus Christ can also be found in the churches.

All the members of the two sects enter their respective churches barefoot.

But many people go to Olivette to take a bath in the village's spring called Jordan. They believe that the water from the spring has healing power.

They also enter the caves in the village. People who had been there said the interior walls of the caves have become smooth as a result of the constant rubbing of handkerchief or pieces of cloth of those who visit them.

They also wade through a long and winding creek up to the waterfalls. Many of them said they feel a certain kind of divine healing after visiting these areas in the village.

UP doctor gives ultimate lesson in anatomy

From page A1

came to see the human vessel's most basic function—as a clever configuration of elements with which to hold systems that should work together to generate life. He knew exactly what to do when it was time to leave his own.

After he died of a heart attack last Feb. 6 at the age of 59, San Juan's body was donated to the PGH, for the use of medical students. It was his last wish.

But it was a first in the government hospital's history. Before San Juan, there had been only criminals, derelicts, and anonymous persons whose remains no one was interested in—no concerned friends or relatives, for which the good doctor did not lack.

"I didn't think he was serious. I was sure it was something he'd forget later on," San Juan's wife Rose said, recalling how he had repeatedly given the instruction.

Their daughter Gelyn said the family would agree, just to humor San Juan, who had suffered a stroke in 1993 and had become wheelchair-bound.

Instead of forgetting, the doctor wrote the wish into his will three years ago. He even threatened, although in jest, to haunt Rose if his request was not carried out. Eventually, she realized that there was no running away from it.

"I saw that his choice was not a sacrifice, but a testament to his good heart," Rose said. "He lived to help others."

It was also an indication of utter humility, Rose said, a quality that San Juan constantly exhibited while he was alive." The PGH has returned the gesture by giving the late surgeon appropriate honors. San Juan has been included in the Dean's International Circle, and his name will soon be added to the Legacy Awards list of prominent hospital personnel displayed in the hospital's lobby.

Rose said her husband decided to donate his body to science after he buried his mother in 2000. To make way for the new coffin, his father's bones had to be exhumed. "He looked at the bones," Rose recalled, "and I heard him say it was 'such a waste.'"

During the last 10 years of his life, San Juan was largely immobilized, but continued to live a full life, according to his family. He practiced his profession "as best as he could," and even remained as consultant to PGH for a while. But he gave up the post soon enough to make way for a newcomer, saying, "He needs it more than I do."

He then busied himself with new hobbies, and set up a resort that he named after his son Jix, who died also in 2000.

The resort was located in a lower-middle class area in Laguna. Gelyn said her father had been "shocked" at the exorbitant rates that the other nearby resorts charged, and was determined that the place should be affordable for most people in the immediate neighborhood.

Despite knowing how "generous and selfless" his husband could be, Rose said his last wish had weighed heavily on the family at first. As a consolation, she proceeded to hold a wake, although San Juan earlier said his body was to be taken directly to the PGH.

During the wake, Rose recounted, not even the hospital officials' assurance that only the best and most senior fellows would be studying her husband's body could make her feel better. Full acceptance came only when the remains were en route to the hospital morgue, she said. "The burden just suddenly lifted."

But almost two months after San Juan's death, his body was "resurrected." A friend of Rose's said she had dreamt of the doctor, and that he had an urgent message for his wife.

"My husband said he wanted to be buried now because he was very tired," Rose said. She rushed to meet with the dean of the UP College of Medicine, who seemed neither surprised nor disappointed. "The dean said they had really planned to just get the internal organs."

San Juan's body will thus be buried on April 22, after it has served, as every single body on earth should, its owner's noble purpose.

ROSE and Gene San Juan, before he left the body: "He said he would haunt me if I didn't do as he wished."

3 Pampanga teenagers on 8th year as flagellants

From page A1

clusive area of adult men.

On Good Fridays in Cutud, the three boys, together with 15 or so youth, are usually seen at the last row of two long lines of some 1,000 flagellants accompanying the man acting the part of Jesus Christ in the yearly Via Cruzis (The Way of the Cross).

Like the rest, these three boys conceal their identities by wearing *kaparosa* (black hoods, sometimes with crowns of leaves) over their heads.

Pedro Yutuc, the village's maker of *panabad* (glass shards fitted into a layer of red cement laid on wood pads) is angry at how the three boys managed to get their backs wounded.

Because Yutuc would not lend them his wounding tool, the boys said they instead used razor blades. Quite a number of men do the same in Cutud.

The oldest of the three boys said he drinks beer to "make the blood thin and spurt out easily."

But the younger ones said they are too young to drink alcohol.

Juvenile devotion

The brothers took to the whip to seek divine help for an end to their grandfather's bout with asthma. The third boy said he was performing the rite so his aunt, stricken with cancer, would get well.

Their relatives are still alive and the boys credit that to their annual devotion.

Seeking divine favors and repentance are among the reasons adult men embraced the tradition.

The three boy flagellants claimed their parents had failed to stop them from joining the flagellation.

An aunt of the brothers said her nephews were just imitating the adults.

Zoilo Castro Jr., San Pedro Cutud village chief, said there had been no clear-cut rules on what exact age penitents could start to become flagellants.

In San Pedro, boys are exposed to a milieu where their grandfathers, fathers, uncles and older brothers are themselves flagellants.

Castro, 52, said the practice had been around since he was young. Local historians believe that flagellation has persisted in the last two centuries in largely Catholic Pampanga. Real-life crucifixion began in the 1980s, old residents recalled.

"Only in recent years did we observe that younger boys have taken to flagellation," he said.

Castro said he found no real reason for them to be atoning for their sins in this painful manner since they were young and thus "less sinful."

Castro said he had gone as far as convincing the parents to stop their children from doing the "adult form of sacrifice." But his pleas, he said, had gone unheeded.

To him, the issue was a "matter of personal decision" and "faith."

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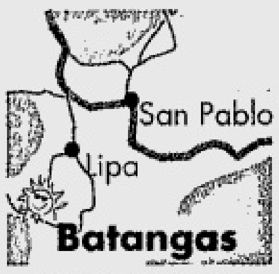

Highway Crossing,
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Trece Martires
Tagaytay
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Aguinaldo Highway,
Tagaytay City

Balinao
Lingayen
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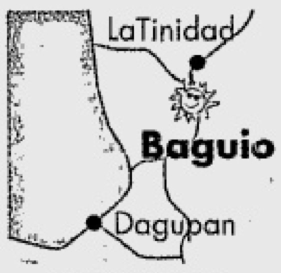
Gapan-Olongapo Rd.,
San Fernando, Pampanga



Burnham Park,
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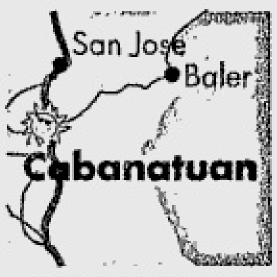

Maharlika Highway,
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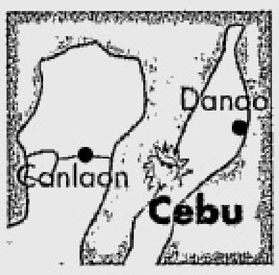

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SARS hits Pinoy group in Canada

From page A1

"There are concerns about the size of the group, how closely they interact, the fact that the Easter weekend is coming up, and trying to identify not only people that are infected but also their contacts," the Winnipeg Sun quoted Dr. Donald Low, one of Canada's infectious disease experts, as saying.

Low had pointed out that sect members work all over the city. He confirmed that public health officials believe some members have not understood the need for self-quarantine.

The Winnipeg Sun, however, quoted a BLD leader, Philip Malolos, as saying that church leaders have agreed to comply with instructions not to stage gatherings during the Holy Week and have canceled all services until the end of the month.

Dr. Sheela Basrur, the chief medical officer of health in Toronto, said 19 members of the religious community are suspect cases and 10 are probable cases.

Probable cases are people showing symptoms who have recently traveled to Asia or have been in close contact with other SARS patients. Suspect cases show symptoms, but have no travel or contact history.

Basrur said authorities figured out over the weekend that the 31 cases were linked.

Toronto, Canada's largest city located 100 kilometers from the US border, is the epicenter of the largest outbreak of the illness outside of Asia, where SARS originated and has sickened thousands. Most of the almost 300 probable and suspected cases in Canada have been in Toronto, including all 13 deaths reported so far.

"We expected to continue to see (SARS) cases sporadically occur in sites, but we did not expect to see this number within a tight-knit community," said Basrur.

The Globe and Mail said health officials have forced two people to obey quarantine orders last Monday.

"They don't believe they're at risk, they think it's an unreasonable measure that has hitherto not been seen . . . They're unaware, or unaccepting," the paper quoted Gene Long, spokesperson for Toronto Public Health, as saying.

Also last Monday, 100 city workers on the 19th floor of Toronto's Metro Hall were quarantined because two co-workers who belong to BLD were being monitored for SARS.

How it spread

According to The Globe and Mail, one BLD member was infected sometime after March 16 after he went to the Scarborough Grace Hospital, where the outbreak in Toronto began.

This person then attended a mass with 500 BLD members on March 28. The next day, half of them went on a retreat.

The BLD patient later went to a hospital complaining of SARS symptoms—which include fever, cough, breathing problems, muscle ache or a headache—but was sent home after doctors decided he didn't have the illness.

The missed diagnosis now means hospitals will have to take a broader view of potential SARS patients, Basrur said.

By the end of March, The Globe and Mail reported, several members had developed SARS symptoms. But they were not diagnosed as having SARS because hospital personnel did not know they had contact with a SARS case.

"Some of these cases were initially given a diagnosis other than SARS despite multiple visits to hospital emergency rooms," according to a memo by Basrur dated last Sunday. "This was due to the apparent lack of a clear epidemiological link to a known SARS case." *With a report from AP*

HK posts highest single-day death toll: 9

HONG KONG registered its highest single-day death toll from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) with nine more victims succumbing to the disease yesterday.

The staggering figure brought the territory's total number of deaths to 56. Another 42 patients with SARS symptoms were admitted to hospitals, taking the cumulative number of cases to 1,232.

The previous single-day record was seven deaths on Monday; 24 SARS patients have now died in the past four days.

The latest victims included a 45-year-old man and three women—aged 32, 34 and 37—who had no prior history of illness. One of the women was pregnant.

China reported four more SARS cases last Monday, bringing the global death toll from SARS to 143, with more than 3,400 confirmed or suspected cases. Three of the deaths were in northern Shanxi province and one in Inner Mongolia.

World Health Organization investigators were seeking permission to visit military hospitals in Beijing that are rumored to hold unreported cases.

"While Beijing authorities appear to have contained transmission in some hospitals, they have not yet granted WHO experts permission to visit military hospitals, which have been the focus of numerous rumors," the WHO said on its website.

"WHO staff in Beijing have expressed particular concern about the official response to rumors and the apparent absence of rigorous contact tracing."

Last Monday, China reported 82 new probable cases of SARS and four deaths, bringing the cumulative total to 1,424 cases and 64 deaths.

Although scientists have already cracked the genetic code of the suspected SARS virus, health officials are saying that they will still have to investigate the disease the old-fashioned way.

Dr. Julie Gerberding, chief of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said it will take "shoe-leather epidemiology" to track down the root SARS.

"In the short run, I don't think the sequence data is going to tell us where it came from," Gerberding said. "Sequencing the virus is a major scientific achievement unprecedented in the history of science. But it is not the magic bullet for dealing with SARS."

Canadian researchers over the weekend first published the entire genetic sequence of the new type of coronavirus believed to be the cause of SARS. CDC officials released their own sequencing of the virus' gene code last Monday.

But the sequencing did not provide any simple answers to questions about the disease. Scientists particularly want to know whether it came from animals.

"There's no smoking gun," said Dr. Mark Denison, a coronavirus expert at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. "It may take very specific studies with a broad panel of investigators to see if they can find an animal infected with the virus."

As the epidemic showed no sign of abating in Asian hotspots, Italian health authorities said they were examining whether or not a man who had died after recently returning from Asia had become Europe's first fatality

"We cannot rule out that it could be atypical pneumonia, but we have to await test results to determine if this was definitely a case of SARS," said Ernesto Felici of the Ravello hospital near Naples.

The man was taken to the hospital after suffering from serious breathing problems. He was then flown by helicopter to the Cotugno hospital in Naples, which specializes in infectious diseases, and later died. *AFP, AP*

DOH says reported SARS death false alarm

From page A1

initially suspected to be afflicted with the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome because she had fever and was short of breath.

In view of the autopsy finding, Dayrit said, the woman's relatives as well as the hospital personnel who attended to her had been released from the quarantine and isolation imposed by the Department of Health.

Dayrit also said another suspected SARS patient died Monday at the San Lazaro Hospital in Manila.

The 46-year-old woman, who worked as a nursing attendant in a home for the aged in Toronto, Canada, died of pneumonia. She was initially taken to a Pangasinan hospital on April 12.

Dayrit said that while the woman had not been in contact with a SARS patient, she was classified as a suspected SARS case because of her cough and respiratory distress.

"We considered her a suspected SARS patient because you can get infected by all kinds of microbes when you work in dirty homes," he said.

However, Dayrit said, the woman died two days after coming down with fever. He pointed out that SARS usually had an incubation period of 5-6 days from the stage of severe fever to respiratory attacks.

Nevertheless, the woman's blood samples have been sent to Japan for testing. Dayrit said the DOH was now tracing the people with whom she had contact.

Nervous

News of the death early yesterday morning of the suspected SARS patient at the FEU Hospital caused a nervous public to become even more so.

Health officials were quick to order the quarantine of her family and medical personnel to prevent the possible spread of the disease.

"She had signs and symptoms that fit our case definition of a SARS suspect, so we consider her a SARS suspect," Dr. Maria Consortia Quizon, director of the DOH's National Epidemiology Center, said in a phone interview. "All those who attended to her in the hospital are now under quarantine . . . including her own relatives."

The woman had supposedly just arrived from New York.

"We came to know about this case late [Monday] afternoon when doctors from FEU called us up, saying they have a suspected SARS patient and asking whether they can bring her to the San Lazaro Hospital," Quizon said.

But before the doctors could do that, the patient expired. By then, her condition had progressed to pneumonia.

The World Health Organization considers patients with fever and cough and a history of travel to SARS-infected places as suspected SARS cases. Those who have respiratory difficulty and whose X-rays show "basal pneumonia" are tagged probable SARS cases.

Only when a blood sample of a probable SARS patient indicates the presence of coronavirus can a patient be classified as a confirmed case.

SARS patients experiencing difficulty in breathing are considered to be in the most infectious stage.

The DOH yesterday issued a statement saying that health workers would continue to be full alert during the Holy Week.

It said the alert level was especially high in hospitals at the frontline in the fight against SARS—the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine in Alabang and the San Lazaro Hospital.

Last week, President Macapagal-Arroyo reported the first "probable" SARS case in the Philippines—a 64-year-old male foreigner who was supposedly infected in Hong Kong.

The patient has since recovered although the President ordered that he be kept in hospital for another week.

Major combat over; US scales down forces

From page A1

work that needs to be done, and we'll let others describe it," she said.

But a drawdown of the massive 300,000 US force deployed for what turned out to be a three-week war is already in the works, officials said.

Also yesterday,

- Having declared the war on Saddam Hussein all but over, the United States and Britain launched talks yesterday in Nasiriyah with fractious Iraqi groups on how the country should be ruled now that he has been overthrown.
- US-led troops worked alongside local police to try and restore order on the streets of Baghdad and other Iraqi cities after Tikrit fell to US forces.
- US officials swiftly turned their attention to neighboring Syria with a series of tirades against the regime there which prompted calls for calm from the United Nations, Arab and European governments worried about their destabilizing effect on the region so soon after the conflict in Iraq.

Gen. Tommy Franks, the commander of US forces in Iraq, is free to send back forces he no longer needs—"and he is doing that," said McChrystal.

"Clearly those assets that are focused on a high intensity air campaign would be the most likely initially," he said. Coalition air forces, which were launching more than 1,500 air strikes a day at the height of the war, dropped only 200 bombs during the previous day, he said.

Ground forces

"We're still early in the ground forces," he said, adding that no ground units have been redeployed so far.

But a decision has been made to call off the deployment of the 1st Cavalry Division, a defense official said.

The 1st Armored Division is still in line to deploy from Germany but it will be heavily weighted with military police, engineering and civil affairs units, McChrystal said.

The US Army's 4th Infantry Division is now almost entirely deployed inside Iraq, and other ground forces, including the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, continued to flow into the region, he said.

"There will be a requirement for combat power for some period of time to maintain or to establish that secure and safe environment," he said.

"But clearly the requirement for civil affairs, for engineer organizations, military police will be significant. In fact, that's designed into the force flow," he said.

Currently there are about 300,000 US forces in the region. About 140,000 US and British troops are inside Iraq, a defense official said.

Two US aircraft carriers—the USS Kitty Hawk and the USS Constellation—are due to head home from the Gulf as early as this week, in the first significant reduction of forces in the region, US defense officials said.

That will leave a single carrier in the Gulf, the USS Nimitz, which last week replaced the carrier USS Abraham Lincoln.

Two other carriers remain in the eastern Mediterranean—the USS Theodore Roosevelt and the USS Harry Truman. But plans are being made to send one of those home soon, too, Vice Admiral Timothy Keating, the US naval commander, told reporters on Saturday.

"Redeployment has already begun of B-2s, F-117s and some F-15C fighters," a defense official said.

F-117 stealth fighters, which opened the war March 20 with a strike aimed at killing Saddam, were due back at their base in New Mexico this week. The B-2s go back to Whiteman Air Force Base in Missouri, and the F-15Cs to Kadena Air Base in Okinawa, a defense official said.

Opposition meeting

The opposition meeting in Nasiriyah was the first since the launch of the war on March 20 and was billed as a major step forward in the search for a new Iraqi leadership.

But the man tipped to become Iraq's next leader, Ahmad Chalabi, head of the US-backed Iraqi National Congress (INC), was to be conspicuously absent from the meeting at which the United States was expected to lay out its vision of a post-Saddam Iraq.

Chalabi planned to send a representative, after insisting he is not a candidate for a post in the interim administration to be run by retired US Gen. Jay Garner. Iraq's main Shi'ite Muslim opposition group has decided to boycott the meeting altogether.

Talks near the ancient Mesopotamian city of Ur, 375 km south of Baghdad, are aimed at shaping a postwar Iraq but looked set to highlight the divisions and discord that run deep among Iraqi opposition groups.

About 60 Iraqis, representing radical and mainstream Shi'ite and Sunni Muslim groups, Kurds and supporters of the monarchy overthrown in 1958, were expected to attend.

But many are irked by the US decision to impose Garner to head an interim postwar administration.

Brig. Gen. Tim Cross, the top British official in Garner's team, said one thing united the Iraqi groups: "I think they want us to leave as quickly as possible. They want to be responsible for their own country again."

Garner, who will chair the talks, said he was concerned at the slow start of Iraq's transition effort.

Baghdad calmer

The Nasiriyah talks take place against the backdrop of a calming security situation, with the United States insisting that the looting and lawlessness that marked the first days after Saddam's overthrow in Baghdad on Wednesday are subsiding.

US troops recalled thousands of police who previously worked for Saddam to help maintain order.

British Prime Minister Tony Blair said: "We are near the end of the conflict . . . the challenge of the peace is now beginning."

Baghdad was slowly returning to a semblance of normality after three weeks of air raids and four days of near-anarchy.

Some food stores opened. Traffic jams again clogged the streets.

But highlighting the ongoing dangers, three American soldiers died and three more were injured in apparent accidental blasts on Monday, the US Central Command said.

Blunt warning to Syria

Just hours after US troops entered Tikrit, US officials issued a series of blunt warnings to the regime of President Bashar al-Assad, accusing it of state terrorism, developing weapons of mass destruction and harboring fugitive Iraqi officials, all charges that Damascus strongly denies.

Secretary of State Colin Powell warned Syria of economic and diplomatic sanctions if it did not heed US demands to mend its ways.

"We will examine possible measures of a diplomatic, economic or other nature as we move forward," Powell said.

White House spokesperson Ari Fleischer was blunter, branding Syria a "terrorist state." *AFP and Reuters*

S'poreans say sorry to angels

From page A1

the recognition and appreciation they truly deserve.

A makeshift shrine of messages of support and appreciation for Singapore's doctors and nurses has sprouted at an underground train station near the Tan Tock Seng Hospital—the designated treatment center for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in Singapore.

The messages were written on colorful paper cards and posted on huge white boards at the Novena station.

One message likened the healthcare workers to angels.

"Every day in the world around us real-life angels are doing the things they do and bringing more smiles to the world around them," said the message signed by the Foo family.

"Real-life angels build bridges instead of walls. They tend to be the only ones who understand what we're going through. And if they sense we're hurting they will do whatever they can to help us. We are the luckiest people of all to have you guys," the message read.

Apology

Another message signed by Alex Soh said: "Though the lives of men are not meant to last, it is the valor of those very few which mightily shines into eternity."

Other messages pin on the boards apologized for the poor way in which some Singaporeans had been treating healthcare workers, which include locals and other nationalities such as Filipinos and Indians.

"In recent days we Singaporeans have behaved quite badly, adding insults to injury. Instead of supporting you we distorted your good name," said one message which signed off as Unworthy Public.

"Still we have to extract your unbended compassion and understanding to forgive our unbecoming (behavior), in that same spirit of Florence Nightingale, you must prevail."

Discrimination

Many of the more than 150 infections of SARS in Singapore are medical workers. A young Singaporean doctor is among the city-state's 10 confirmed SARS fatalities.

Nurses, recognizable in their white uniforms, have complained they are being shunned in trains and buses by a paranoid public.

Some have been told by landlords to vacate their rented rooms and others have received anonymous letters from neighbors advising them not to share the lift in their apartment blocks.

Some taxis have also refused to ferry them to work, while some bus drivers do not stop to pick them up.

People who care

"We will stand firm in the face of uncertainty," said a message by Dr. Sean Seah.

"Thanks for your valiant efforts. You are truly heroes," said another missive.

"Your sacrifice will be all worth it in the end," said Johnson Teo, who identified himself as a student.

"I think we just wanted to find a way to show healthcare workers here that there are people out there who do care," a 24-year-old medical student, who was passing out pens and papers to commuters who wanted to write a message.

"They've been picking up a lot of flak lately and we felt this would be a great way of showing that there is a big heart rooting for all those involved in this fight against SARS," he said.

Some doctors from Tan Tock Seng Hospital who stopped by to read the messages said that they were touched.

But one doctor said, "We're just doing our job. This is what we do." *AFP*

ADVERTISEMENT

Make Health - Not War!

The war against Iraq is still going on and there is already a winner: the people of the World. Over the past weeks we have informed the people in America and the rest of the World about the background of this war and its main corporate benefactor - the pharmaceutical industry.

This information was first published in 'The New York Times', in the city where political leaders had congregated at the United Nations over the recent months like rarely before in history. International tension and the escalation to war created a climate where the information about the pharmaceutical industry as the main benefactor of the 'war against terrorism' spread like a bush fire.

The global spread of this information was also an important reason why small countries in the Security Council - unexpectedly - resisted the pressure by the United States and British administrations, denying them any mandate and any support by international law for their war.

Now, the war led by the Bush and Blair administrations can no longer reach its primary political and economic goal - that is to impose the monopoly of the multi-trillion dollar pharmaceutical investment business with disease on the people of this planet for generations to come.

As the scientist whose discoveries enable us to control today's most common diseases by natural means and having unmasked the corporate benefactors behind the current war, I consider it my responsibility to issue a call to the people and the political leaders of the world to immediately start building a 'World without Disease'!

"One day there may even be wars just to provent your breakthrough from being widely accepted," said two-time Nobel Laureate Linus Pauling shortly before his death in 1994 to Dr. Rath.

Call to Action to the Heads of States and the People of the World.

Health for All by the Year 2020

In my opinion mankind now has an unique opportunity to liberate itself from today's most common diseases.

A BREATH-TAKING PERSPECTIVE

- **Cardiovascular disease** has been identified as the result of a structural impairment of the blood vessel wall similar to the sailor's disease scurvy. Optimum supply of vitamin C and other micronutrients that stimulate the production of collagen - the vascular reinforcement molecules - is an effective, safe and affordable way that can benefit heart conditions. Thus, the number one cause of death in the industrialised world today can largely be eradicated in this and future generations.

  I believe global implementation of this scientific knowledge will save millions of lives, billions in health care dollars.

- **High blood pressure, heart failure, irregular heart beat, and diabetic circulatory problems** are primarily the result of long-term micronutrient deficiencies impairing the function of millions of cells that compose the heart muscle and the blood vessel walls.

  I believe global implementation of this scientific breakthrough will save millions of lives, and billions in health care dollars.

- **Cancer,** the second most frequent cause of death in the industrialised world is no longer a death verdict. All cancer cells spread by using the same mechanism. They produce massive amounts of collagen-digesting enzymes capable of paving their way through the human body during cancer spread.

  Effective, safe and affordable micronutrients such as the amino acid lysine, vitamin C and other specific nutrients have been known to block these enzymes and thereby impede cancer disease without any side effects.

  I believe global implementation of this scientific breakthrough will save millions of lives, billions in health care dollars and eliminate the trillion dollar pharmaceutical business with cancer.

- **Infectious diseases, AIDS and other epidemics** are the leading cause of death in the developing world. B-vitamins and other essential nutrients regulate the production of white blood cells and optimise immune system function in the fight against tuberculosis and other epidemics. Moreover, vitamin C alone has been shown to reduce the multiplication of the AIDS virus to less than 1% of its normal rate.

  Global implementation of this scientific breakthrough will save millions of lives, billions in health care dollars.

In summary, I believe today's most common diseases can now be largely eradicated by natural therapies, thereby improving human health globally.

WHY THIS DID NOT HAPPEN EARLIER?

At the beginning of the 21st century mankind wakes up to a nightmare. A hundred years ago the Rockefeller Group, already controlling the global oil business at that time, defined another global investment market: the human body and the diseases it hosts.

The return on their investment became dependent on the patentability of drugs and the respective patent royalties. Under the umbrella of 'philanthropy' and 'benefactors to mankind' the greatest deception in the history of mankind was strategically developed.

Millions of patients were promised a 'cure' for their health problems, but the vast majority of the 'remedies' sold had no proven efficacy, at best they covered symptoms. By triggering new diseases from drug side-effects, these products constantly expanded the pharmaceutical market'.

A strategic precondition for this new market was the elimination of 'competition' from effective natural therapies. The basic knowledge about the essential nutrients required for optimum cellular metabolism was systematically eliminated from medical schools, the textbooks of medicine and from the minds of generations of doctors.

Over several decades the pharmaceutical cartel became the largest investment industry on planet earth. The huge profits were used to gain influence in all areas of society, including science, medicine, media and politics. Even the largest international bodies did not resist its influence.

WE NEED A NEW WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION

The World Health Organisation was founded more than 50 years ago to promote health on a global level. A first focus was to improve health through nutrition, including micronutrients. Within two decades the influence of the pharmaceutical cartel had shifted this focus. By influencing the WHO and other UN organisations (e.g. 'Codex Alimentarius') this industry is trying to impose global laws to protect and promote the pharmaceutical investment business with patented drugs from being eliminated by mostly superior, but non-patentable natural therapies.

As the direct result of this silent 'take over' of control of global health care by the pharmaceutical industry during the past century, hundreds of millions of people have suffered from diseases that could have vanished long ago. Today, more than two billion people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies in the developing world alone. Thus, all of us must now work towards building a new world health organisation that liberates us from today's most common diseases.

WE NEED A HEALTHY AND PEACEFUL WORLD

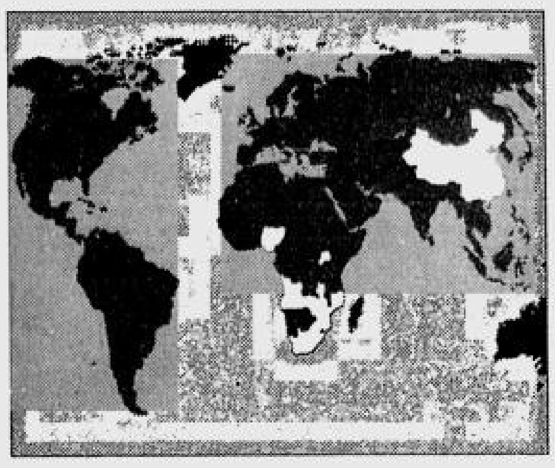
Health is a basic human right. We, the people of the earth will not allow this right to be withheld from us any longer. We will not rest until the right to health - particularly the unrestricted access to natural therapies - has become a human right for all people of the world, guaranteed by national and international constitutions.

I call upon every person on earth: No matter where you live and what you do you should start building this new world right now! Every living room, every doctor's office or hospital, every school, university, community centre, every education text book or film that promotes natural health is a first step towards creating a healthier world. By constructing this new world we can build towards eliminating entire diseases and also release billions of dollars in funds that are currently wasted for promoting war and destruction.

I call upon the political leaders to implement natural health as the basis of a prevention-oriented national health care policy. Now that this scientific knowledge is available around the world, you must use it to improve the health of your people. Every country that redirects its health care towards natural health is a quantum leap forward towards a common goal: Health for All by the Year 2020.

There is no time to be lost!

Sincerely,



Every country that focuses its health care system on effective, natural, non-patentable health approaches is an important step towards a healthier and more peaceful world.

You can follow the liberation of mankind from the yoke of the pharmaceutical cartel on the Website of our Foundation.

PUBLIC HEALTH INFORMATION ON SARS

What the WHO does not tell you about natural protection from the new epidemic

The latest example of the failure of the World Health Organisation (WHO) to serve the health interests of the people of the world is its incomplete information policy in the face of the SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) epidemic.

It is a scientific fact that all viruses can be blocked by specific essential nutrients. The natural substance ascorbic acid (vitamin C) is known to decrease or block the replication of all viruses it is applied to. Viral diseases are essentially unknown in the animal world, because most animals - as opposed to man - produce high amounts of vitamin C in their body. Moreover, all viruses spread in the human body by using the same enzymes (collagenases) which can be partially or completely blocked by means of the natural amino acid lysine. For scientific studies and further references visit the website of our Foundation.

The fact that there are natural substances available to help protect millions of people from SARS must be disseminated world wide immediately. These natural substances are not only effective but also without any side effects and - most importantly - available anywhere in the world right now.

The fact that the WHO is failing so seriously in disseminating life-saving information on natural, non-patentable health measures is no coincidence. It reflects the fact that the WHO is not primarily serving the health interests of the people but is apparently instrumentalised by the pharmaceutical industry.

The people of the world now have the chance to liberate themselves from this dependency.

**"You have the choice to live in today's world of disease and war.
Or you can help build a world of health and peace. For this new world you need to stand up!"**

Matthias Rath, M.D.

More Information: www.dr-rath-foundation.org

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Hewitt threatens legal action vs ATP

SYDNEY, Australia—World No.1 Lleyton Hewitt is threatening to sue the ATP, which runs the men's tennis tour, over his fine for failing to show for a US TV interview in Cincinnati last August. News Ltd. newspapers in Australia reported Tuesday that unless a dispute between Hewitt and the ATP was resolved, the Wimbledon champion would take action in the South Australia Supreme Court seeking 2.5 million Australian dollars (US$1.5 million) in damages for defamation and legal costs. *AP*

PSC releases funds for Palaro

BUHAIN

By Marc Anthony Reyes

PALARONG Pambansa truly got going as funds started rolling yesterday.

The Philippine Sports Commission made the regional delegations very happy when it approved the release of funds to the athletes seeing action in the Palaro slated May 4-11 in Tubod, Lanao del Norte.

Though the agency has yet to determine how much money each delegation would get, PSC chair Eric Buhain ordered to release the funds to speed up the preparation for the Games to be held at the P500-million Mindanao Civic Center.

President Arroyo had earlier approved a P30-million budget for the Games through the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation, on top of the P10 million already allotted by Congress through the General Appropriations Act.

This developed as the National Capital Region and Western Visayas (Region 7) expressed readiness to join what is anticipated to be the biggest Palaro ever, considering the effort exerted by the provincial government of Lanao del Norte, PSC, Department of Education, Department of Interior and Local Government, Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police.

The 14 other regions have already submitted their entries.

Manila Sports Council head Ali Atienza said the Big City already has confirmed entries to the NCR contingent which gets most of its athletes from the Manila roster.

Atienza added that athletes who stood out in the recent Manila Youth Games won't see action in the Palaro yet, because the roster was already completed following the regional qualifying which was held well in advance.

Buhain said he will give priority to the participating school children, who will come down to Mindanao from all parts of the country with a common goal to be the country's next athletic superstars.

The Games will be held at the world-class MCC, an 18-hectare spread fronting the scenic Panguil bay. It was built for the sole purpose of staging the Palaro which the province has been wanting to host since 1997.

Express won't pay Hawkins contract

GAMES TODAY *(Philsports Arena)*
5 p.m.—FedEx vs San Miguel
7:30 p.m.—Talk N Text vs Sta. Lucia

By June Navarro

IT WILL take some time for Bong Hawkins to relish the millions of pesos he stands to earn from a contract dispute with Airfreight 2100, owner of the FedEx Express in the Philippine Basketball Association.

Or, worse, he won't even have the chance to enjoy it.

This developed yesterday after Air21 management gave a cold treatment on the decision of the PBA Commissioner's Office to honor the remainder of Hawkins' four-year contract worth P9.6 million.

Airfreight 2100 president Lito Alvarez said the Express would resort to legal means instead of giving in to the ruling of PBA Commissioner Noli Eala. Alvarez also urged the 6-foot-3 Hawkins to file a lawsuit.

Eala upheld the decision of former PBA commissioner Jun Bernardino and ruled in favor of Hawkins last week, obliging the Express to pay Hawkins at least P400,000 a month until the end of the 2004 season.

The dispute stemmed after the Express inherited the contract of Hawkins last year from Tanduay, which sold its franchise to Air21 at the start of the 2002 season.

Reports have it that Tanduay offered two contracts to Hawkins with the first pact good for four years while the other has an exit clause after two years wherein Hawkins would be forced to renegotiate with Tanduay.

Citing some problems on the first contract, the Express opted to honor the second covenant, triggering a dispute that led to the decision of the Commissioner's Office.

Tanduay lawyers, however, advised Alvarez to let the wheels of justice take its course since the court of law automatically supersedes the ruling of the commissioner.

Meanwhile, San Miguel Beer will find a way to soften the aggressive defense of FedEx Express when they meet today in the Samsung-PBA All Filipino Cup at the Philsports Arena.

"They (Express) can force you into costly turnovers. That's how they won four straight games," said San Miguel Beer coach Jong Uichico moments after his Beermen shaded Sta. Lucia Realty, 80-77, last week.

Uichico's analysis has its foundations and is backed by solid evidence. Coach Derrick Pumaren and the Express have struck fear in the hearts of their opponents as far as defense is concerned.

The Express continue to show the way on steals and points off turnovers every night and are running second in shot blocks, forced turnovers and fastbreak points after nine games.

"The statistics show they can pressure. We'll work it out," said Uichico, whose Beermen hold a 5-4 slate in Group B.

Table tennis meet reset due to SARS

THE PREVAILING Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome scare has forced the organizing Table Tennis Association of the Philippines and IMG to reset the LG 9th Southeast Asian Table Tennis Championship to September.

Originally slated for April 22-25 at the Glorietta Activity Center in Makati and Rizal Memorial Coliseum, the tournament was moved upon the advice of the Southeast Asian Table Tennis Association, which fears the SARS outbreak may affect the participants.

"We have put so much effort and resources in preparing for the event but have decided to reset it for the good of all the participants and sake of national interest," said Victor Valbuena, president of the organizing Table Tennis Association of the Philippines.

"We do not want the tournament to be the cause of concern as most participants come from countries where there have already been reported cases of SARS-related deaths. But we're definitely pushing through with the event in September. We do not want to let our players down and we would like to fulfill our commitment to our sponsors," added Valbuena.

Superal pulls away

By Jong Arcano

WHEN three double-bogeys could have easily brought him down, Wolen Juan Superal still fashioned a one-under-par 71 yesterday to put the Class D battle to bed one round early again in the Samsung Jungolf Tour at the Faldo course of the Eagle Ridge Golf and Country Club.

Superal stayed on course towards becoming the first jungolfer to win a tournament in recent memory with three consecutive sub-par rounds as he totaled 138 for 36 holes. He exploded with the lowest score so far in the Tour of five-under 67 on Monday.

He collected eight birdies, five of them on the first eight holes, that wiped out the three double-bogeys and a bogey on the third.

Superal's rivals are now left fighting for the runner-up trophy with second-running Migs Arevalo, scoring an 86, 24 shots behind at 162 and Anthony See farther in third at 175.

Remijin Camping (girls Class A), Geleen Handog (girls Class B), Bino dela Paz (boys Class E) and Gian Sibaya (girls Class E) likewise appear headed to unchallenged wins with double-digit leads going to the final round.

The tourney given major backing by Samsung is also supported by Philippine Airlines, Airlift Asia, Exito Mfg., Global Lighting and Air Liquide, Phils with Wilson Sports as equipment sponsor.

Still with a lot of hardwork to do are Marlo Capinianes (81-162) who was just up by one over Aran Olea and Aaron Dimabuyo in boys Class A and Gino Bunye who led Miko Yee and by four in boys Class B. It was even tighter in boys Class C where Anelo Asistio who was neck-and-neck with Brent Sumampong (170-171) while Bambi dela Paz and Debbie de Villa shared the girls lead at 176.

A PICTURE of Washington Wizards Michael Jordan is projected on the floor during halftime in their NBA game against the New York Knicks in Washington. The Knicks won, 93-79. REUTERS

Jordan gets US flag in final home game

WASHINGTON—Only after Michael Jordan went to the bench for the final time in a home game did fans in the American capitol give the National Basketball Association legend a worthy farewell tribute.

The 82nd consecutive sellout crowd of 20,178 rose and applauded when Jordan was removed and continued their standing ovation through the final two minutes and two seconds of Monday's game here against the New York Knicks.

The Knicks beat Jordan's Washington Wizards, 93-79, but the outcome, like the final two minutes, was mostly ignored as fans, who gave only a normal pre-game ovation, waited until Jordan was gone before paying homage to him.

"They really didn't have to do it," Jordan said. "The fans have been very respectful. They have shown me respect by being at every game, 82 sellouts. There's no need for what they did but they did it and I'm very appreciative." Jordan, 40, led the Chicago Bulls to six NBA titles, three before retiring in 1993 to play baseball and three more after his return in 1995. He retired again in 1999 but was lured back again by Washington last season.

There were signs such as "MJ we will all miss you" and "Michael Jordan for President" and a video replay of highlights from Jordan's 15-year career. *AFP*

COMPLETE RESULTS

New Orleans 87, New Jersey 74; Atlanta 100, Orlando 84; New York 93, Washington 79; Detroit 89, Cleveland 88; San Antonio 91, Utah 83; Dallas 109, Seattle 106; LA Clippers 122, Golden State 113.

Welcoat regains winning form

GAMES SUNDAY
(Pasig Sports Center)
2 p.m. —Blu vs LBC-Batangas
4 p.m. —Viva vs Welcoat
6 p.m. — RP Team vs Nutrilicious

By Marc Anthony Reyes

WELCOAT Paints pulled off a morale-boosting 87-57 victory over Nutri-licious yesterday in the Sunkist-PBL 2003 Unity Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

Coach Leo Austria expressed hope that the victory, which gave them a 2-4 record, will help the Paint Masters climb back to the top after suffering successive losses.

Jojo Tangkay, Abby Santos and Ariel Capus scored in double figures to make the triumph possible as they conspired to bury the Juicers with relentless forays from all sides of the court.

"We still have a chance to be on top. But more than anything, this win will keep our spirits high as we take the Lenten break," said Austria.

Tangkay scored seven of his game-high 17 points in the first quarter to give Welcoat a 19-11 lead which Nutri-licious was never able to surmount.

Welcoat also got a big game from relief point guard Marlon Kalaw who scored six points and issued eight assists. Kalaw, filling in the shoes of suspended Paul Artadi, also rose to the occasion by effectively running Welcoat's fastbreaks which yielded 15 points.

The Paint Masters ruled the inside lane, beating the Juicers in rebounds (48-32), aside from turning in 16 second-chance points.

Scores:

WELCOAT 87— Tangkay 17, Santos 16, Capus 15, Wilson 12, Pingris 7, Kalaw 6, Coching 6, Patrimonio 4, Torrente 2, Celo 2, Garcia 0, Latoreno 0.

NUTRI-LICIOUS 57 —Sotto 14, Omolon 13, Junio 12, Lanete 11, Valdez 4, Rivera 3, Daep 0, Allen 0, Malonzo 0, Valnio 0, Gonzales 0.

Quarters: 19-11, 40-23, 63-42, 87-57.

Weir hopes victory will inspire lefties

AUGUSTA, Georgia— Newly crowned Masters champion Mike Weir is hoping his dramatic victory on Sunday will inspire golf's most maligned breed–the lefty.

The 32-year-old Canadian became only the second left-handed player in history to win a Major when he defeated unheralded Len Mattiace at the first hole of a sudden death play-off on Sunday.

New Zealand's Bob Charles was the torch bearer for the 'left' when he won the British Open in 1963.

Even Mattiace is a secret left-hander, who switched to playing right-handed when he was a child.

Third place went to golf's most famous lefty–Phil Mickelson making it a clean sweep for the left.

Weir warns that the lefty revolution is coming.

"It's been a long time since Mr. Charles won a Major. So it's the first time in a long time. Phil's been close obviously in the last few years," said the quiet-spoken Canadian.

"There are other lefties out there coming up. There are five other guys I believe on tour that have their cards and are good players and there will be more to come," he warned.

The fact that Weir has managed to reach the pinnacle is made even more impressive by the problems he faced growing up.

"I think back when I was starting out junior golf - the equipment issue was a bit of a factor. That was a tough thing," he explained.

Left-handers 20 years ago had to wait months before the latest clubs would be sold in southpaw versions.

"Now it's not an issue," said Weir, who has become a national hero by becoming the first Canadian to win a Major. *AFP*

WEIR: Lefty revolution is coming. AP

Karl makes US '5' anew

WASHINGTON—Karl Malone and Mike Bibby were officially selected for the United States' basketball team charged with the task of striking gold at next summer's Athens Olympics.

"Being the grandpa of the group I'm kind of honored, I'll be 41 playing for the gold medal so I'm excited about it," said Utah's Malone.

"I'm excited but I'm sure those guys will be looking to me for some leadership and the main thing is to try to bring the gold back where it belongs."

They join Tim Duncan (San Antonio), Tracy McGrady (Orlando), Jason Kidd (New Jersey) and Ray Allen (Milwaukee), the players already selected.

Kobe Bryant (LA Lakers), Allen Iverson (Philadelphia) and Jermaine O'Neal (Indiana) are the next due to join the squad. *AFP*

Paxson Bulls GM

CHICAGO, Illinois—The Chicago Bulls on Monday named John Paxson as their new executive vice president and general manager. Paxson replaces Jerry Krause, who resigned a week ago, citing health problems. A player, assistant coach and broadcaster for the Bulls, Paxson was selected over B.J. Armstrong. *AFP*

Negros Or. joins NBL

THE REVITALIZED National Basketball League has accepted Negros Oriental as its eighth and newest member.

This was confirmed by Negros Oriental Gov. George Arnaiz yesterday, saying that the team will see action in the first NBL national championship starting on May 10.

Seven other teams–three from the North–are seeing action in the tourney which has already received the support of Air Philippines, Gatorade and Molten Basketballs.

Joining Negros Oriental in the South are M. Lhuillier Kwarta Padala-Cebu, Bacolod and Shineway Ham Sausage-Ozamiz, while the teams from the North are Pampanga, Tarlac, Forward Taguig and Spring Cooking Oil-Bulacan.

NBL executive vice president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla said NBL will not only offer basketball but total entertainment as side events like street parties will be included in the coming national championship.

VAT RIDERS, POSTMEN

Gov't teams Tour favorites

By June Navarro

A RARE blend of mountain climbers and flat-road specialists will shore up the respective bids of the VAT Riders, Postmen and Patrol 117 for the overall crown when the Tour Pilipinas 2003 gets off the ground on April 24.

Felix Celeste, a common fixture in the Tour during the 90s, will banner the Bureau of Internal Revenue's VAT Riders of Commissioner Guillermo Parayno while the Postmen of the Department of Transportation and Communication of Secretary Leandro Mendoza will be spearheaded by national rider Enrique Domingo.

Also expected to come out strong in the 15-stage, 18-day cycling adventure is the Department of Interior and Local Government-backed Patrol 117 squad of Secretary Joey Lina, which will be skippered by Bernard Luzon, a veteran campaigner in the Tour of Ireland in the past.

CELESTE

The three teams, including the EcoSavers of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the DrugBusters also of the DILG, will work to further spread the ideals of their respective government advocacies when they hit the road and vie for the P1 million champion's purse in the 2,460-kilometer Tour.

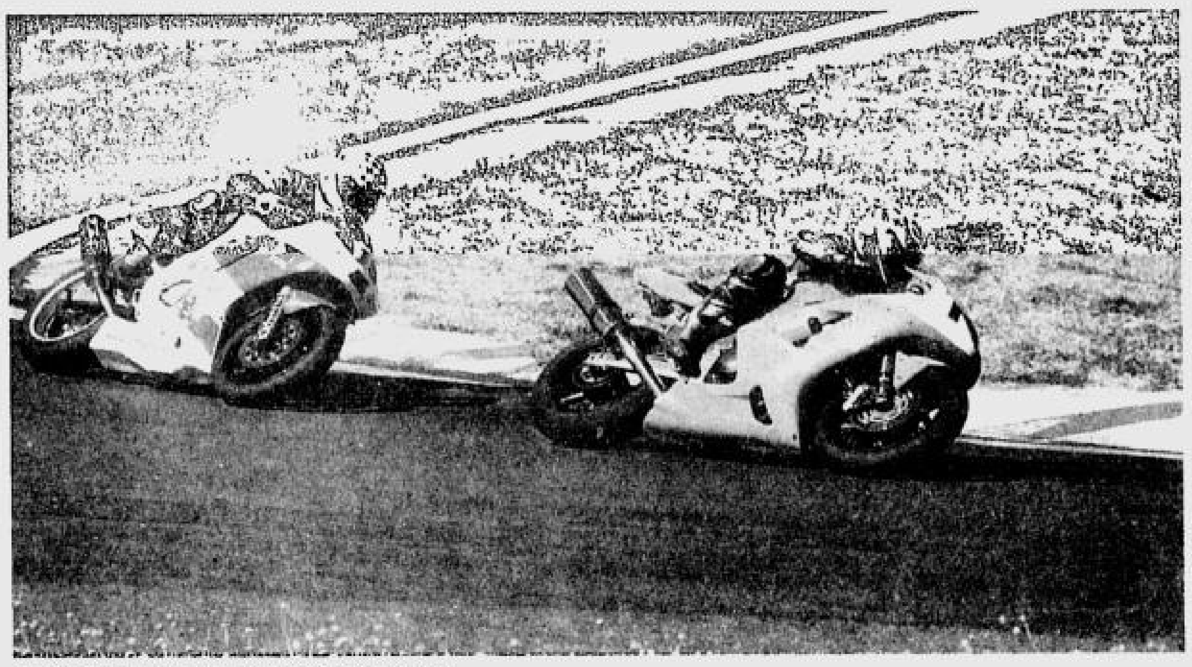
"We have a balanced field," said Art Cayabyab, the Tour's race manager. "All the 12 teams are endowed with experts on the flat terrain and mountain climbers."

The 32-year-old Celeste, whose claim to cycling fame was a fourth-place finish in the 1992 edition of the previous Tour, will be backstopped by Marcial Robosa, Joel Calderon, Avelino Bayuga, Robert Villaber and Sherwin Jamsay, a proven specialist on the elevated terrain.

A seasoned campaigner on several international competitions, Domingo will team up with Reynaldo Navarro, Wilfredo Calosa, Arnold Marcelo, Renato Sembrano, Rene Esteban and Sherwin Carera for the Postmen.

Patrol 117's Luzon receives an added boost from Dionisio Posilero, the 30-year-old Sprint King of the four-day SBMA Cycling Classic, and will also rely on Reinhard Gorantes, Eusebio Quinones, Ryan Mendoza, Gerry Amar and Joseph Severino.

Patrol 117, a quick-response emergency agency, will try to attack the flat roads while consistently challenging the uphill racers in the hopes of becoming the fastest team in the field.


SUPER BIKE CHAMPIONSHIPS
Six-time champion Jolet Jao of Shell Advance-Rolex Engineering shows the way in the first round of the Shell Super Bike Championships at the Batangas Racing Circuit in Rosario, Batangas.

SPORTSTV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

BASKETBALL: NBA - Greatest Games, 8 a.m.; Blazers vs Suns, 10 a.m. (r - 8 p.m.), Solar Sports
World Pro Basketball Challenge, 10 a.m. (r), ESPN
NBA Anthology - 1991 Chicago Bulls: Learning To Fly, 7:30 p.m., ESPN
GOLF: LPGA Kraft Nabisco Championship, 9 a.m. (r), ESPN
POOL: World Pool League 2002, 9:30 p.m. (r), ESPN
Mosconi Cup 2001, 10:30 p.m. (r), ESPN
BASEBALL: NCAA College World Series 2002, 1 p.m. (r), ESPN
BOWLING: World Tenpin Masters 2002, 4 p.m. (r), ESPN
SOCCER: EPL - Arsenal vs Manchester United, tomorrow at 2:30 a.m., ESPN
Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

A park without a tree

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

SO it's business as usual at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite, but what does the horseracing people and the legions of sports fans really think?

"It's not ready yet to host big-time races," said a diehard fan. "Construction work is still going on at the venue and one can clearly see that it was opened in a hurry, albeit haphazardly."

Then why did the Philippine Racing Commission, the ruling body for the sport, allow the San Lazaro Leisure Park to hold the races? That Philracom decision to permit the races at the unfinished park was wrong, said concerned horse owners.

I visited the Carmona complex recently to verify the truth. And here's what I found out:

- There were no trees planted in the 77-hectare San Lazaro Leisure Park. How could you call it a park when there is not a single tree in it?
- Construction work at the complex, including the main building, was still in progress. Thus, SLLP management and the sponsoring Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office are well-advised to reset the forthcoming Silver Cup in honor of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo on May 4 to a later date until such time that the venue is picture perfect and safeguards are in place.
- The grooms (sota), stable caretakers and their families (who were forced to stay in Carmona following the demolition of their old homes at the former San Lazaro Hippodrome on Tayuman Street in Manila) are now living under slum-like conditions where there are no permanent toilets, no privacy and, worse, no electricity. According to them, electricity is only available from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. daily. Is this how we treat a major partner in the horseracing industry? How could you now call SLLP world-class?
- No perimeter fences to prevent wayward horses from escaping and/or hurting innocent spectators.
- The place is too dusty. Aside from this, the one-kilometer walk from the stables to the saddling paddock is too long and tiring for the horses who have to endure the unbearable heat, not to mention the hazards of walking under sharp stones and hard corals.
- Overall, the existing conditions are not conducive to producing quality racehorses who are bathed, massaged and pampered like movie stars. Racehorses are athletes who work hard for a living. They need a healthy environment and the same love and care that you do with your favorite pets. Racehorses fall into a deep sleep several times over a 24-hour period.

Methinks the Philracom failed to consider these factors in issuing the permit. An open forum and a visit to SLLP with the media in attendance could answer this ticklish question once and for all. And let the public judge.

***

For inquiries, call telefax (044)-933-1214.

SPORTSWATCH

Tuason, Garcia win

FORMER Philippine Sports Commission chair Carlos "Butch" Tuason and Juan Jose Garcia captured the overall title in the 4th Don Celso Tuason and Valley Founder's Cup golf tournament at the Valley Golf and Country Club in Antipolo City recently. The event also saw Arnold Duay and Alfredo Hizon top Division I, Ramon Nicky De Mesa and Manolo Maralit rule Division II and Enrique Dela Cruz and Alfredo Javellana prevail in Division III. In the sponsors' division, Bolo Tuason and Antonio Dela Cruz snared the title while Duay, Garcia and Dela Cruz won the lowest individual scores in their respective divisions.

Kim low medalist

KIM IN II of Woree Tours and Son Deuk Kwon of Mana Compass Tours ran away with the low medalist and low net honors in the 1st Invitational Golf Tournament co-organized by Grand Boulevard Hotel and Puerto Azul Golf and Country Club in cooperation with the Phil-Korean Travel Agents Association (PKTAA) recently in Ternate, Cavite. Choi Hyuck of Segye IRC Tours was first runner-up while Yon Man Hyung of Ace Tours was second runner-up in the one-day event also supported by Duty Free Philippines, Southeast Asian Airlines and Air Philippines.

Under-14 football

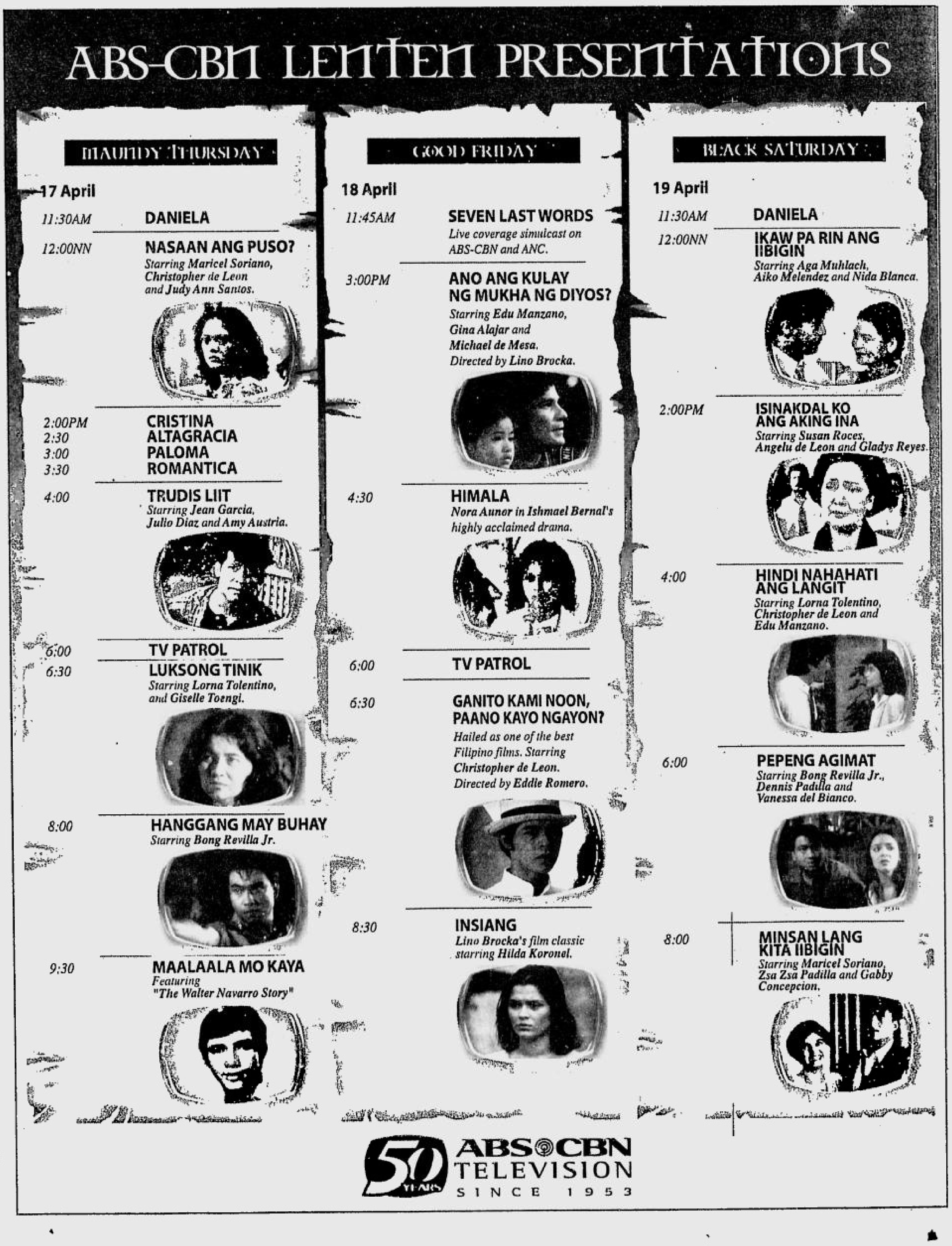
TWO more tournaments—one in Masbate and the other in Tarlac—will kick off after Easter Sunday in the Red Ribbon Bakeshop Under-14 Football Festival organized by the Philippine Football Federation. Eight teams will see action in the Masbate competition which unwraps at 8:30 a.m. on April 21 at the Masbate Sports Complex.These are Masbate South Football Club, Masbate National City High, Dimasalang Kickers B, Dimasalang Football Club, Aroroy Football Club, Cataingan Football Club, Mandaon Football Club and Panguiranan Football Club.The opening matches pit Masbate National City High against Mandaon FC and Panguiranan National High against Aroroy FC.

De Dios gains final

TARLAC CITY—Olongapo bet Nico Riego De Dios defeated Alexis Lopez, 6-1, 6-2, yesterday to reach the boys' 18-under final in the First City Sunrise Junior Tennis Championships at the Sunrise Tennis Club covered courts here. De Dios, champion in the Juntaphil Cup-Baguio last week, will face Angeles City's Christian Cuarto, who scored a 6-2, 7-5 win over Baguio City's Jimmy Tangalin Jr. In the boys' 14-under class, Leyan Moncera downed Mark Balce, 6-3, 6-4, to advance in the semifinals against Rodell Navarro, who rallied past Angelo Patrimonio, 3-6, 6-1, 6-4.

Regatta reset April 22

THE OPENING of the 11th President's Cup Regatta was moved to April 22 at the Subic Bay Freeport. Organizers announced this yesterday after one of three divisions in the one-design races was scratched. The premier Keelboat races of the Open division will still go on as scheduled with defending champion Stella and three-peat winner Subic Centennial among the 29 entries.The one-design class races was moved from May 1 to 4 at the Manila Yacht Club with hostilities commencing in the Optimist and Streaker classes. The Hobie 16 class was scratched for lack of participants.


ABS-CBN LENTEN PRESENTATIONS

MAUNDY THURSDAY
17 April

11:30AM	DANIELA
12:00NN	NASAAN ANG PUSO? *Starring Maricel Soriano, Christopher de Leon and Judy Ann Santos.*
2:00PM	CRISTINA
2:30	ALTAGRACIA
3:00	PALOMA
3:30	ROMANTICA
4:00	TRUDIS LIIT *Starring Jean Garcia, Julio Diaz and Amy Austria.*
6:00	TV PATROL
6:30	LUKSONG TINIK *Starring Lorna Tolentino, and Giselle Toengi.*
8:00	HANGGANG MAY BUHAY *Starring Bong Revilla Jr.*
9:30	MAALAALA MO KAYA *Featuring "The Walter Navarro Story"*

GOOD FRIDAY
18 April

11:45AM	SEVEN LAST WORDS *Live coverage simulcast on ABS-CBN and ANC.*
3:00PM	ANO ANG KULAY NG MUKHA NG DIYOS? *Starring Edu Manzano, Gina Alajar and Michael de Mesa. Directed by Lino Brocka.*
4:30	HIMALA *Nora Aunor in Ishmael Bernal's highly acclaimed drama.*
6:00	TV PATROL
6:30	GANITO KAMI NOON, PAANO KAYO NGAYON? *Hailed as one of the best Filipino films. Starring Christopher de Leon. Directed by Eddie Romero.*
8:30	INSIANG *Lino Brocka's film classic starring Hilda Koronel.*

BLACK SATURDAY
19 April

11:30AM	DANIELA
12:00NN	IKAW PA RIN ANG IIBIGIN *Starring Aga Muhlach, Aiko Melendez and Nida Blanca.*
2:00PM	ISINAKDAL KO ANG AKING INA *Starring Susan Roces, Angelu de Leon and Gladys Reyes.*
4:00	HINDI NAHAHATI ANG LANGIT *Starring Lorna Tolentino, Christopher de Leon and Edu Manzano.*
6:00	PEPENG AGIMAT *Starring Bong Revilla Jr., Dennis Padilla and Vanessa del Bianco.*
8:00	MINSAN LANG KITA IIBIGIN *Starring Maricel Soriano, Zsa Zsa Padilla and Gabby Concepcion.*

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RAPID CHESS

Villamayor prevails

BUENAVENTURA "Bong" Villamayor held fellow GM Eugene Torre to a draw in the 11th and final round yesterday to rule the first part of the 2003 Shell National Open Rapid Chess Championships grand finals.

The draw gave Villamayor, chess coach of the Philippine Air Force team, eight points in 11 rounds as he beat Torre by a point in the round-robin tournament held at the Multi-Purpose Hall, Department of the Interior and Local Government, 8th floor, A. Francisco Gold Condominium II, Edsa, Quezon City.

The 35-year-old Villamayor had turned back IM Petronio Roca in the 10th round to stay clear of the pursuing Torre.

The 22-round event sponsored by Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. and supported by DILG takes a one-week break in observance of the Holy Week. "I'm satisfied with my performance. At least, I have gained points for the second round," said Torre.

The second round will resume on April 20 and will end on April 24.

Like Villamayor, the 52-year-old Torre won in the 10th round at the expense of IM Jayson Gonzales to finish with seven points.

GM Joey Antonio drew his last two matches to be at solo third with 6.5 points as the country's top players lived up to expectations.

Antonio halved the point with NM Rolly Martinez in the 10th and IM Nelson Mariano II in the final round.

IM Ronald Bancod turned out to be the biggest gainer for the day as he posted back-to-back wins in the last two rounds to climb into a tie for 4th and 5th places with six points.

Bancod, coach of the College of St. Benilde team in the NCAA, topped NM Joseph Roland Perez in the 10th round before polishing off Gonzales in the 11th round.

Also with six points was Martinez, who towed 5.5 pointers IM Mark Paragua, Roca and NM Ronald Dableo. *Roy Luarca*

Swim school produces champions

By Marc Anthony Reyes

INFANTS frolic in the water as instructors watch.

WHAT do Eric Buhain, Ryan Papa, Christine Jacobs and Emem Velasco have in common aside from prominence in the sport of swimming?

They learned their basics from the Lozada Swimming School.

For more than five decades, the pioneering swimming school has been producing swimmers who have given honors to the country in international competitions.

It is for this reason that LSS, which has also served all the First Families since the term of President Manuel L. Quezon, is the only institution recognized and accredited by the Department of Education.

This summer, LSS is conducting learn-to-swim program in different venues in Metro Manila.

The program, to be handled by Asean championships medalist and former national coach Mario Lozada, is open to kids six months old and above.

Lozada, who also trained as coach at the Stanford University in California, will lead his instructors in one-hour sessions morning and afternoon from Monday to Sunday. For details, call 871-9988 or 872-0330.

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▣ P.5M Ecstasy tablets seized A19

METRO
E-mail: pr_metro@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Abelardo S. Ulanday

Number coding in effect in Makati today

VEHICLES with plate numbers ending in 5 and 6, beware. The number coding will be in effect in Makati City today even if the MMDA has suspended it for the rest of Metro Manila. Mayor Jejomar Binay said the coding is in effect today because it is a regular working day for private companies.

Leila Salaverria

New pedestrian walkways to rise

Structures will be see-through, roofless and narrow, says MMDA

FERNANDO

By Leila B. Salaverria

IN THE next few months, pedestrians could expect to use a new kind of overpass: see-through, roofless, narrow, metal walkways.

Metro Manila Development Authority General Manager Robert Nacianceno said the new walkways would be built along the elliptical road and Commonwealth Avenue, roadways where pedestrians often have to dodge oncoming vehicles because of the lack of pedestrian crossings.

In fact, Commonwealth Avenue has been dubbed a "killer" highway because of the number of pedestrians being hit by vehicles there.

He said the construction of around five overpass walkways would begin in the next few weeks, after the MMDA has dispensed with the bidding.

According to Nacianceno, MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando has asked for a new design for the overpasses to make them more practical and cheaper.

Fernando had explained that the existing concrete and covered pedestrian walkways were often too wide and too heavy, considering that only a certain number of people use them.

"A car would be able to fit in most of the overpasses that we have now," he remarked.

Hence, the new overpasses would be made narrower and be made of steel, which is lighter and cheaper than concrete.

Also, the sides of the new overpasses won't consist of a wall, unlike the current design. Instead, metal bars with spaces in between them would make up the sides of the walkway to ensure that even from the ground, people would be able to see what is going on in the overpass.

"That would prevent holdups, and police could easily spot if illegal vendors stay in the overpass," Nacianceno said, adding that the walkways would also be well-lighted at night.

He also said the new overpasses would be roofless as an added measure to discourage ambulant vendors from staying in the area.

If it is raining, he added, then the pedestrians should use their umbrellas when crossing the overpass, as Fernando has suggested.

Nacianceno also said in an interview yesterday that the old overpasses along Commonwealth Avenue could either be retained or moved to a narrower road when the expansion of Commonwealth Avenue pushes through.

Pasig residents want toxic factory closed

By Nelson F. Flores

RESIDENTS of a residential area in Pasig City affected by the toxic fumes emitted by a local factory last week want city Mayor Soledad Eusebio to order the closure of the factory.

The residents aired this sentiment during the public hearing conducted by the city legal office at the city hall last Monday.

The residents said only the complete stoppage of the operation of Resin-1 Chemicals would prevent chemical-related accidents from happening in the future.

In response, barangay officials said they have declared a 800-meter danger zone around the factory to keep the public from wandering near the establishment, which is still undergoing cleanup operations.

Meanwhile, Eusebio, clarifying earlier reports, said the city government has actually given Resin-1 the necessary permit to operate but not to store toxic chemicals.

She stressed that in storing toxic elements, the factory violated one of the city's ordinances and which could be a ground for closure.

In another development, the Pasig City Environment and Natural Resources said Resin-1 has neither an Environmental Clearance Certificate from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources nor a clearance to operate from the Laguna Lake Development Authority.

onstage 2nyt

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1 FINAL DESTINATION
2 CRADLE TO THE GRAVE
3 (DOLBY) TEARS OF THE SUN
4

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729
1 SEX DRIVE
2 THE CORE
3 (DOLBY) GANGS OF NEW YORK
4 WILLARD

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305
1 (DOLBY) SEX DRIVE
2 (DTS) THE CORE
3 GANGS OF NEW YORK

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) PALABAN
2 PARU-PARONG LIGAW
3 (DTS) SEX DRIVE
4 VIRGIN PEOPLE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 (DOLBY) THE CORE
2 SEX DRIVE
3 (DTS) WISH MASTER
4 JAILBIRD
5 FINAL DESTINATION

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 KANGAROO JACK
2 SEX DRIVE
3 SEX & ZEN

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
1 THE EYE
2 SEX DRIVE
3 SEX & ZEN

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3203
1 SEX DRIVE
2 TEARS OF THE SUN
3 (DTS) DREAMCATCHERS
4 GANGS OF NEW YORK

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808
1 (DTS) RESERVE
2 RESERVE

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657
1 GANGS OF NEW YORK
2 SEX DRIVE
3 RESERVE

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 TEARS OF THE SUN
2 GANGS OF NEW YORK
3 SEX DRIVE
4 JUST MARRIED

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045)887-5001 TO 03
1 (DOLBY EX) GANGS OF NEW YORK
2 SEX DRIVE
3 THE CORE
4 JUST MARRIED

Cine Nepo Mall
(Angeles City) te (045) 887-0121
1 WISH MASTER
2 MESSAGE SEND
3 (DOLBY) GANGS OF NEWYORK
4 JUST MARRIED

*Movies are subject to change without prior notice

ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY dts SDDS

FESTIVAL CINEMA
Level 4
Festival Supermall
Filinvest - Alabang
Tel. 85035-71 to 72

HE STOLE THE MONEY... AND HE'S NOT GIVING IT BACK
KANGAROO JACK
NOW PLAYING

NOW SHOWING

SM CINEMA
SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 833-9999
NOW SHOWING

SM CITY BACOOR
4173888
1 THE WILD THORNBERRYS
2 ANGER MANAGEMENT
3 THE CORE
4 NATIONAL SECURITY
5 WHAT A GIRL WANTS
6 CLOSED
7 KANGAROO JACK
8 JUNGLE BOOK 2

SM CENTERPOINT
7149522 -7161416
1 NATIONAL SECURITY
2 THE WILD THORNBERRYS
3 KANGAROO JACK
4 WILLARD
5 THE CORE
6 SEX DRIVE
7 ANGER MANAGEMENT
8 SOLARIS
9 WHAT A GIRL WANTS
10 THE RECRUIT

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749
1 THE WILD THORNBERRYS
2 WILLARD
3 TEARS OF THE SUN
4 ANGER MANAGEMENT
5 NATIONAL SECURITY
6 SEX DRIVE
7 THE CORE
8 KANGAROO JACK
9 THE RECRUIT
10 JUST MARRIED
11 WHAT A GIRL WANTS
12 JUNGLE BOOK 2

SM CITY MANILA
5239240
1 WHAT A GIRL WANTS
2 NATIONAL SECURITY
3 JUNGLE BOOK 2
4 THE CORE
5 ANGER MANAGEMENT
6 THE RECRUIT
7 KANGAROO JACK
8 SOLARIS
9 SEX DRIVE
10 WILLARD
11 WILD THORNBERRYS
12 JUST MARRIED

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6320401
1 GANGS OF NEW YORK
2 THE RECRUIT
3 SOLARIS
4 NATIONAL SECURITY
5 ANGER MANAGEMENT
6 JUST MARRIED
7 JUNGLE BOOK 2
8 WILD THORNBERRYS
9 WHAT A GIRL WANTS
10 THE CORE
11 SEX DRIVE
12 KANGAROO JACK

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452
1 SOLARIS
2 THE CORE
3 KANGAROO JACK
4 THE WILD THORNBERRYS
5 ANGER MANAGEMENT
6 JUNGLE BOOK 2
7 NATIONAL SECURITY
8 WHAT A GIRL WANTS

SM SOUTHMALL
8066888
1 ANGER MANAGEMENT
2 WHAT A GIRL WANTS
3 NATIONAL SECURITY
4 JUNGLE BOOK 2
5 WILD THORNBERRYS
6 THE RECRUIT
7 SEX DRIVE
8 THE CORE
9 SOLARIS
10 KANGAROO JACK

SM CITY CEBU
2313876
1 TEARS OF THE SUN
2 THE CORE
3 THE WILD THORNBERRYS
4 JUST MARRIED
5 RING 2 (JAPANESE)
6 AMAZON
7 SEX DRIVE
8 THE RECRUIT

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422
1 GANGS OF NEW YORK
2 CLOSED
3 THE CORE
4 EXTREMISTS
5 DREAMCATCHER
6 THE RECRUIT
7 CLOSED
8 SEX DRIVE

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7128015
1 THE CORE
2 SEX & ZEN 2
3 JUST MARRIED
4 THE RECRUIT
5 ABANDON
6 SEX DRIVE

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294975
1 NATIONAL SECURITY
2 KANGAROO JACK
3 THE CORE
4 WHAT A GIRL WANTS

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302
1 THE CORE
2 SEX DRIVE
3 NATIONAL SECURITY
4 KANGAROO JACK

SM CITY DAVAO
2976999
1 DREAMCATCHER
2 EXTREMISTS
3 TEARS OF THE SUN
4 THE CORE
5 THE WILD THORNBERRYS
6 THE RECRUIT

SM BICUTAN
776-3055
1 NATIONAL SECURITY
2 WHAT A GIRL WANTS
3 KANGAROO JACK
4 ANGER MANAGEMENT

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
859-2884
1 DREAMCATCHER
2 JUST MARRIED
3 GANGS OF NEW YORK
4 THE CORE

C I N E M A
18 ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City
633-6976

1 SOLARIS
11:40 FS/12:10 MF/2:20/4:30/6:40/8:50/
10:30 LFS/11:00 LMF/12:40 END

2 THE WILD THORNBERRYS MOVIE
11:00 FS/11:05 MF/1:00/2:55/4:50/6:45/
8:40/10:05 LFS/10:30 LMF/11:55 END

LATE NIGHT SCREENING DURING FRIDAYS AND SATURDAYS
Matinee : P100.00 - Screening until 5pm • Monday thru Friday
Regular Rate : P120.00 - After 5pm • Saturday • Sunday • Holidays (Reserved Seating)

Movies are subject to change without prior notice

MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS
@ Robinsons Malls
call-a-movie: 536- 7812
NOW SHOWING

Galleria 632- 9115- 16 / 633- 7641 loc. 279
THX THE CORE
11 MF, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00, 12:15 MF
2 WHAT A GIRL WANTS
3 JUST MARRIED
4 NATIONAL SECURITY
5 ANGER MANAGEMENT
6 SOLARIS
7 JUNGLE BOOK
8 SEX DRIVE
9 KANGAROO JACK
10 THE RECRUIT

MATINEE PRICE: P90 THX cinema P75 level cinemas
Mon.- Fri. / 10am - 4pm (EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)

Ermita 536 -7809- 12
1 ANGER MANAGEMENT
2 SOLARIS
3 JUNGLE BOOK
4 KANGAROO JACK
5 SEX DRIVE
6 WHAT A GIRL WANTS
7 NATIONAL SECURITY

Metro East - Marcos hway 682- 8193 / 8280
1 JUNGLE BOOK
2 SOLARIS
3 THE CORE
4 THE RECRUIT
5 NATIONAL SECURITY
6 ANGER MANAGEMENT
7 KANGAROO JACK
8 SEX DRIVE

Novaliches 935- 3229 - 30
1 THE CORE
2 JUNGLE BOOK
3 THE RECRUITS
4 ANGER MANAGEMENT
5 KANGAROO JACK
6 WILD THORNBERRY
7 WHAT A GIRL WANTS
8 SEX DRIVE

Malabon Citisquare 288-0985 / 288-2575
1 WHAT A GIRL WANTS
2 KANGAROO JACK
3 SEX DRIVE
4 ANGER MANAGEMENT

Star Mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp. 875- 1927 / 961- 5318 / 5270
1 SEX & ZEN
2 JAIL BIRDS
3 THE RECRUITS
4 JUST MARRIED
5 ABANDONED
6 THE CORE

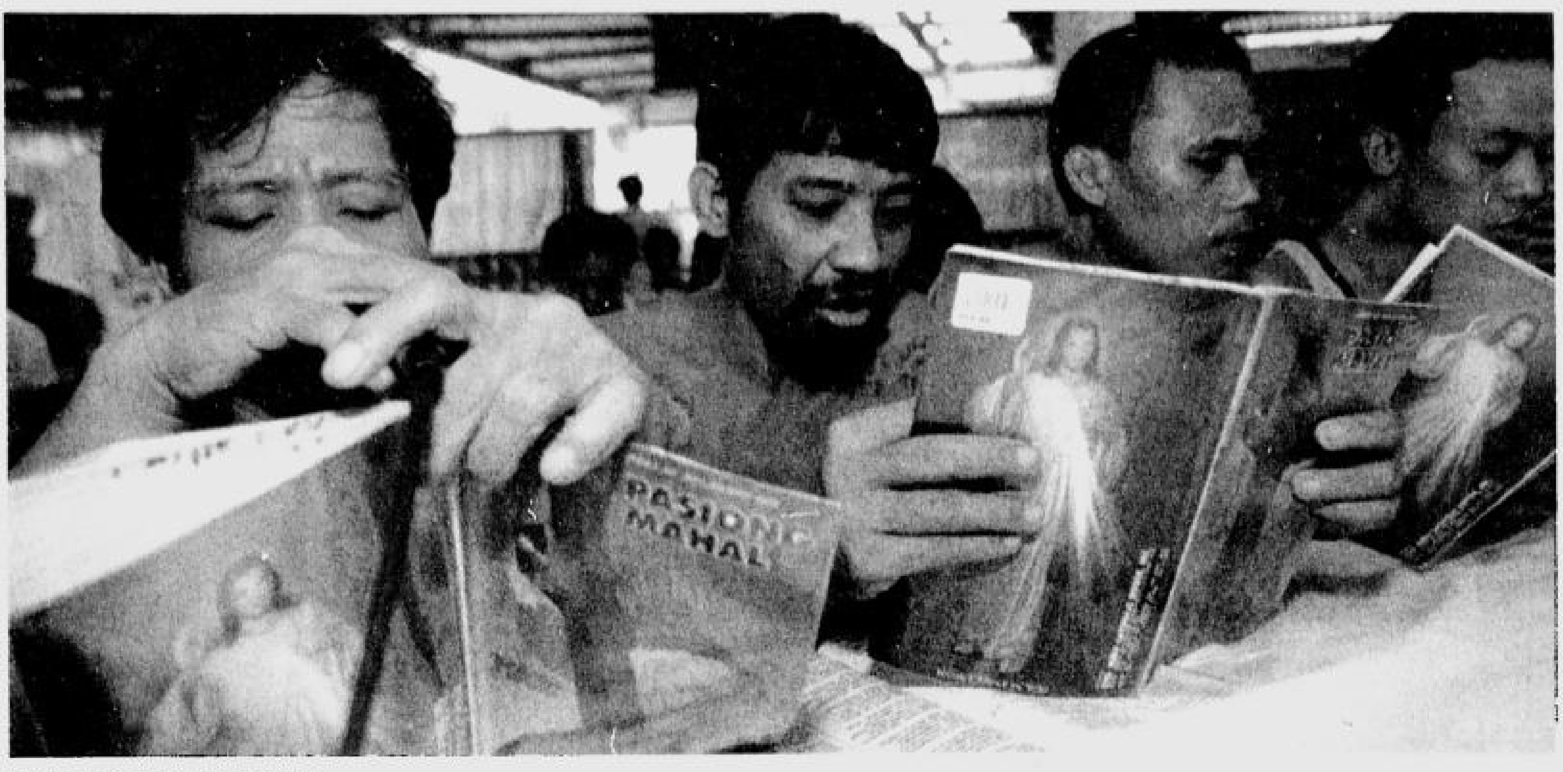
Imus 471- 8188 / 875- 3838
1 ANGER MANAGEMENT
2 EQUILIBRIUM
3 JUNGLE BOOK
4 KANGAROO JACK
5 SEX DRIVE
6 WHAT A GIRL WANTS

Sta. Rosa Laguna 049-8370907
1 KANGAROO JACK
2 THE CORE
3 ANGER MANAGEMENT
4 SEX DRIVE
5 JAIL BIRD

Bacolod 441- 0453 / 0459
1 DREAM CATCHER
2 FINAL DESTINATION
3 THE RECRUITS
4 THE CORE
5 BANGER SISTERS
6 ABANDONED

Iloilo 336- 8077 - 78
1 THE CORE
2 DREAM CATCHER
3 THE RECRUIT
4 EXTRIMIST
5 GANGS OF NEW YORK
6 SEX DRIVE

MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.



JAILHOUSE 'PABASA'
Inmates at the Quezon City jail deliver the traditional "pabasa," a yearly ritual during the Holy Week, among these men behind bars.
JOAN BONDOC

Tax incentive for owners of old buildings

By Jerome Aning

TEN months after the Manila City Council enacted the ordinance, Mayor Lito Atienza on Monday said he would implement the five-year realty tax exemption provided by the ordinance to owners of dilapidated buildings due for rehabilitation or reconstruction in the city's "old downtown."

The ordinance, authored by Atienza's son-in-law, Councilor Miles Roces of the 3rd district, was passed on June 18, 2002.

Buildings covered by the tax exemption include edifices in the Sta. Cruz-Quiapo area, particularly along Quezon Boulevard, Rizal Avenue and Escolta Street, as well as buildings in San Nicolas, Binondo.

The ordinance was filed and enacted upon Atienza's prodding. The mayor identified the old downtown as one of the priority areas for redevelopment under his Buhayin ang Maynila urban renewal program.

He said the measure would encourage building owners in these areas to redevelop their structures "since it would be to their benefit."

"Aside from the savings that they would be able to generate from the five-year tax incentive, they would also be able to attract new locators and even increase their income due to the improvements that they would undertake," Atienza explained.

The mayor has begun his redevelopment of Quiapo by beautifying Plaza Miranda and organizing street vending on Carriedo Street.

The tax incentive shall apply to improvements with a minimum cost of P1 million, the amount of which is to be based on the building permit to be issued by the building officials upon application of a property owner or a lessee for the improvement of a building or structure.

Owners and lessees may avail themselves of the tax incentive until Dec. 31, 2004.

The ordinance defines major repairs and rehabilitation as "restoration and/or improvement work on any building within the areas covered to enhance its appearance or prolong its economic life."

Reconstruction refers to the "construction of a new building in lieu of a new one."

METROBRIEFS

Busted

POLICE Officer 2 Romeo Costibolo, 38, who is assigned to the Central Police District's Support Service Unit, was caught selling illegal drugs in a buy-bust operation in Quezon City on Monday night. P02 Bernard Quintero said the suspect was caught after police received a tip about his alleged drug dealing. He said Costibolo was arrested after he took P500 from a supposed buyer of shabu. Five plastic sachets containing shabu were also found on the suspect, police said. Costibolo, who is facing dismissal from the service and drug charges, is now detained at the CPD police station 5 in Fairview, Quezon City.

Alcuin Papa

Nabbed

GONZALO Apog, 36, of Don Mariano Street in Barangay Commonwealth, Quezon City, was stabbed dead by an unidentified man last Monday. Police said Apog's assailant escaped after the stabbing. Apog was stabbed at about 9 a.m. at the corner of Villangco and Jerusalem Streets. Police said the suspect had a grudge against Apog.

Alcuin Papa

Collared

DANILO Solo, 18, who is a suspect in several rape and robbery incidents in Taguig was arrested yesterday after his latest rape victim filed a complaint against him with police. Solo was arrested while he was inside a rundown jeepney parked in San Juan, Signal Village. The complainant, a 21-year-old woman, told police that she was on her way home on the night of April 12 when Solo poked a knife at her and tried to rob her. She said that when he could not find anything valuable on her, he dragged her to the jeepney and raped her. Police said Solo has a string of criminal cases involving robbery and sexual assault filed against him.

Christian V. Esguerra

Captured

INMATES Hermie dela Pena, Angelito Trinidad, 25, and Leonardo Serna, who escaped from the Taytay Municipal Jail last Sunday, have been recaptured in various parts of Metro Manila, police said. The inmates escaped with fellow detainees Enrico Calderon, Jonathan Claudio, Noel Lopez, Peter Lorenzo, Rodolfo Villanueva, Edgardo Senase, and Romeo Castillo after they overpowered Senior Jail Officer 1 Antonio Alcoreza, who was serving them breakfast. The inmates are facing charges ranging from drug use, theft to armed robbery.

Nelson Flores

WPD goes on high alert

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE Western Police District cancelled all the leaves of its men and had gone on heightened alert to prevent any terrorist attack in the capital during Holy Week.

"We don't have any leaves so that we will have enough policemen around during Holy Week," said Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong, WPD Director.

The WPD has also intensified its monitoring of LRT, bus and shipping stations in Manila in anticipation of the sudden influx of passengers bound for the provinces for the Holy Week.

WPD spokesperson Gerry Agunod said they had already deployed "secret agents" to different bus terminals and shipping lines in the North and South Harbor.

Bulaong yesterday went to different public transportation stations to check if tight security measures were being implemented by the authorities.

Besides the more than 3,000-strong Manila police force, the WPD is also deploying 80 motorcycles and 50 mobile patrol cars.

"We are also coordinating with the barangay units as ordered by Mayor (Lito) Atienza, so that the 14,000 barangay watchmen will be fully utilized," Bulaong said.

He said members of the WPD-Explosive and Ordnance Division and their K-9s have also been deployed to bus terminals. The bags of commuters are stringently checked for explosives and other deadly weapons.

They want to keep oil depot

By Jerome Aning

FORTY-TWO barangay chairs in Pandacan, Manila have asked the City Council to repeal a two-year-old ordinance phasing out the controversial oil depot complex.

In their March 28 position paper, a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER, the chairs cited socio-economic and legal reasons in opposing the implementation of City Ordinance No. 8027.

The paper was supposedly signed by the chairs during a hotel summit sponsored by the operators of the oil depot in the first week of April.

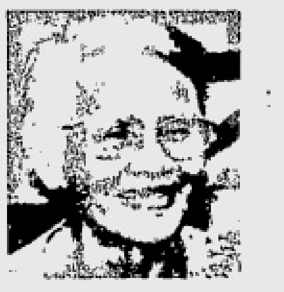
But Barangay 835 chair Felix Majabague Jr. refused to sign the paper.

The document—along with appropriate joint barangay council resolutions, petitions from affected residents and barangay clearance certificates—has been forwarded to Vice Mayor Danilo Lacuna, who heads the Council's committee of the whole, which is tasked to study the controversial ordinance.

C.O. 8027 converted the site of the 33-hectare depot from an industrial to a commercial zone.

The scheduled phaseout of the fuel terminal has been suspended twice after Mayor Lito Atienza extended the effectivity of a memorandum of understanding allowing Caltex, Shell and Petron to continue staying in Pandacan.

Help us find her



ANGELINA E. Pollarco, 78, (right) has been missing since March 29.

She was last seen wearing a white blouse, dark blue pants and black sandals. She has white, shoulder-length hair.

Those who know her whereabouts may inform Vangie or Cecile Pollarco of 20 Duhat St., Doña Josefa Village, Las Piñas City or call them at 801-6840.

P.5M Ecstasy tablets seized

By Alcuin Papa

MORE than half a million pesos worth of Ecstasy tablets were seized from a suspected drug dealer by members of the Central Police District on Monday while his alleged cohort was also thrown into jail when he tried to bribe police for the release of the suspect.

The suspects were identified as Francis Raymundo and John Cheng, 26, both residents of 4 Rosas Street, Valle Verde 2, Pasig City. Both suspects are now detained in Camp Karingal, Quezon City.

Based on reports, Raymundo was arrested in a buy-bust operation at around 9:30 p.m. in Libis, Quezon City. Seized from Raymundo were 30 tablets of Ecstacy worth between P5,000 to P30,000 per tablet.

Cheng was also arrested when he went to the CPD DEG office to visit Raymundo. Cheng allegedly tried to bribe Chief Insp. Redentor Maranon with P5,000 for the release of Raymundo.

SARS flyers over Parañaque

By Christian V. Esguerra

THOUGH practically clueless on how to prevent cases of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, the Parañaque government is set to flood the city with at least 60,000 flyers containing whatever available information on the deadly disease.

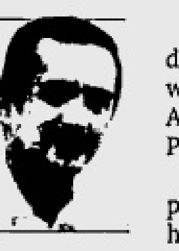
The information materials will advise residents to observe proper hygiene and diet and exercise regularly to somehow maintain strong anti-bodies against SARS, said information officer Mar Jimenez.

Most of the leaflets will be distributed in Parañaque's 16 barangays while 10,000 of them will be circulated at the city hall.

To GMA: Don't be cruel

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad



CHITO Bertol, who did Elvis Presley—sideburns, soulful eyes, rich, haunting voice, etc.—as good as the doubles who portrayed Saddam Hussein, has momentarily shelved rock 'n roll.

The one-time Elvis Presley of the Philippines now sings a protest song.

No, he doesn't go to parks, other crowded areas to voice what's burning in his heart.

All he yearns for is to reach out to concerned decision makers.

President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, to be exact, yeah.

***

In the first place, Mr. Bertol happens to be president and GM of the Manila Seedling Bank Foundation, Inc.

Well, those who had not visited the seedling bank could not be expected to listen to what Mr. Bertol is crying, oh so broken-hearted, about.

My dear wife is a regular, so she was in near tears upon hearing that the seedling bank would be wrecked to give way to a provincial bus terminal.

Nothing as magically healing as that place, she swears.

Just like those who had experienced the quiet, soothing, god-given wonders inside the seedling bank, like the butterfly farm, the joyful orchards, charming corners of smiling flowers and plants, lush garden, flowing waters, she's one in crying with Chito Bertol, "Honey don't!"

***

Listen. Mr. Bertol protests that Executive Order No. 179 was, oh no, signed (by GMA) and issued without public consultation.

The protestor also doubts if GMA had ever bothered to visit the seedling bank, a vast, happy nursery, at the corner of Edsa and Quezon Ave.

If she had, Mr. Bertol asks, why did GMA sign the executive order which goes against the Clean Air Act, "the very first law signed by Pres. Arroyo?"

Not only that. Bertol cries that a project of this magnitude should have been made known to the offices concerned.

"The seedling bank was undergoing improvement and development and all of a sudden offices and entities are being asked to move out," he groans.

There are other alternative areas that would be ideal for the construction of a bus terminal, he explains.

And, in closing his protest, Bertol sighs: The seedling bank is the only environmental institution along Edsa; wrecking it can only worsen air and noise pollution in the metropolitan area.

In short, he's wondering sincerely if the President knows what she's doing.

On behalf of those who fight to maintain serenity (and sanity) in the cruel city, Mr. Bertol cries, Presley-style, "Don't be cruel, to a heart that's true."

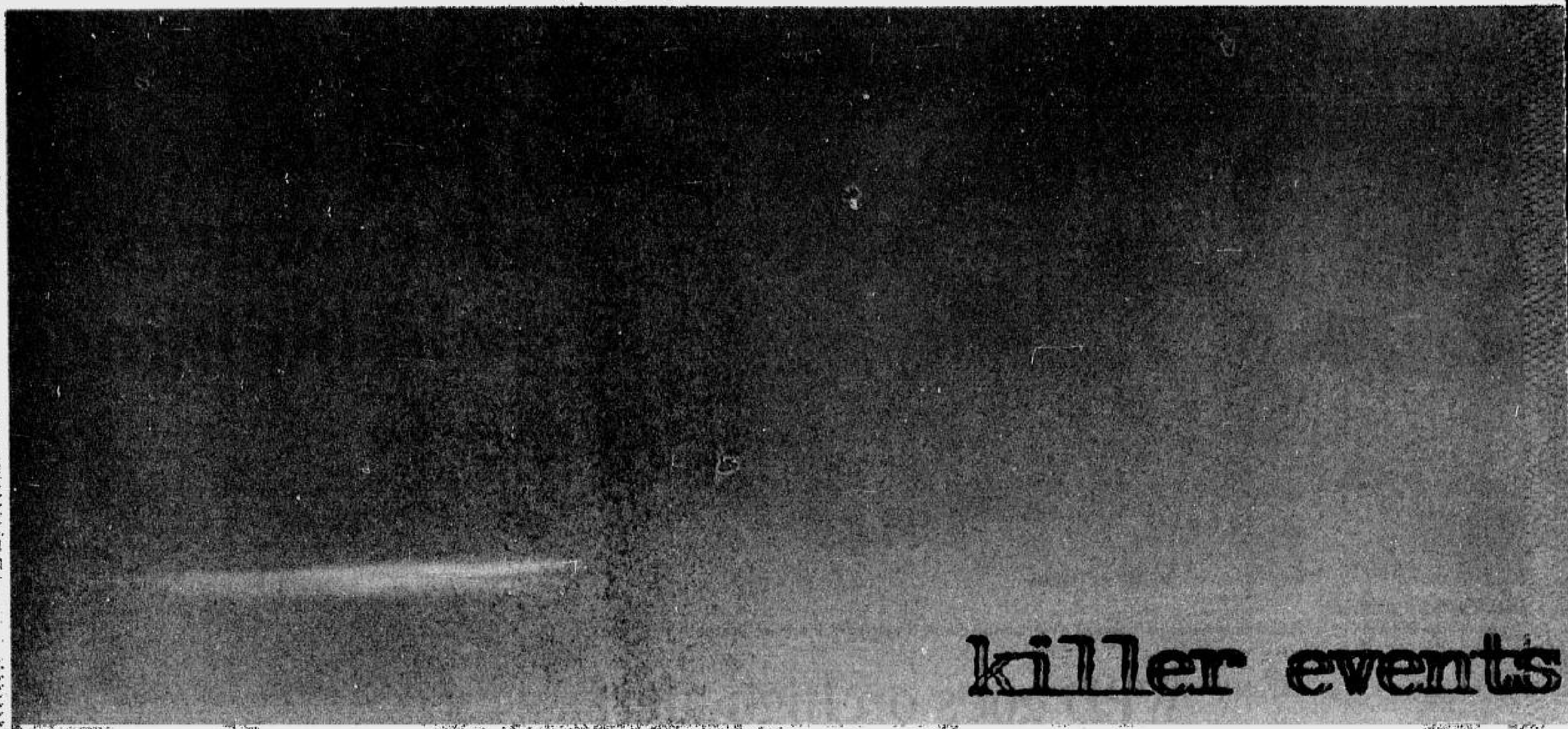
Calling all kiddies!
Have an EASTER Party
at Araneta Center
On April 20, Sunday at ELEPHANT WORLD

GRAND ELEPHANT PARADE
4PM TO 5PM
Have fun together with marching bands, clowns, higantes and higantitos from Lucban, Quezon, classic cars from the Vintage Car Club of the Philippines, and the 2003 Bb. Pilipinas winners!

MCDONALD'S EASTER EGG HUNT & KIDDIE SHOW
5PM TO 6PM
Join Ronald McDonald in an egg-hunting expedition and FREE variety show! Get a chance to win Tamiya Cars and Spy watches from Nestle!

THE MAGICAL WORLD OF JEFF SIMON
DIRECT FROM LAS VEGAS!
6PM
Watch the Prince of Magic in a 45-minute spellbinding spectacle for FREE!

PLUS!
ELEPHANT WORLD SHOW
5PM
RIDE AND FEED THE ELEPHANTS
6PM
TAGA-DISCO & VIKING CARNIVAL RIDES
Don't forget to grab your P20 coupons now!
4PM TO 12 MIDNIGHT



killer events

Gentxt April Attack

There Is No Escape

BEACH

APR16-20
Wed-Sun

Gentxt @ Boracay

The Philippines' premiere beach paradise parties Gentxt style!

- Free entrance to Gentxt parties for all Gentxters. Watch out for our roving Gentxt Gang for great games and freebies.

Club Summerplace

April 16, 5:30pm: Latin House Sunset Session with Roberto Sanchez and Samba Funk / 10pm: Beach House Party feat. DJ Jaco and DJ Cocoy Puyat
April 17, 10pm: Brasilia by Latin Canteen feat. Carlo Ching
April 19, 10pm: Reggae Concert with Carlotta Ensemble, Indio I, Brownman Revival, 63 Squad and DJ Jaco
April 20, 9pm: Live Island Chill with Noel Cabangon

Pier One

April 16, 9pm: Next Level
April 17, 9pm: Silk
April 19, 9pm: Next Level & Silk
April 20, 4pm: Novalounge by Latin Canteen featuring Scrambled Edge and Mike Constantino

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APR24-26
Thu-Sat

Gentxt presents Boracay Bound 2

Celebrities and models join the summer sports frenzy!

Apr 24, 2pm: Beach Volley @ Pier One / 10pm: R&B Party @ Caribo
Apr 25, 2pm: Beach X Games @ Pier One / 4pm: Chillout Lounge @ Waling-Waling / 10:30pm: V-Bar@ Pier One feat. Cinderella's latest beachwear & V-Bar House DJ's
Apr 26, 2pm: The Big Boracay Beach Hunt Challenge @ Pier One / 4pm: Chillout Lounge @ Boracay Plaza
10:30 pm: Reggae Night @ Summer Place feat. Tropical Depression

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APR16-19
Wed-Sat

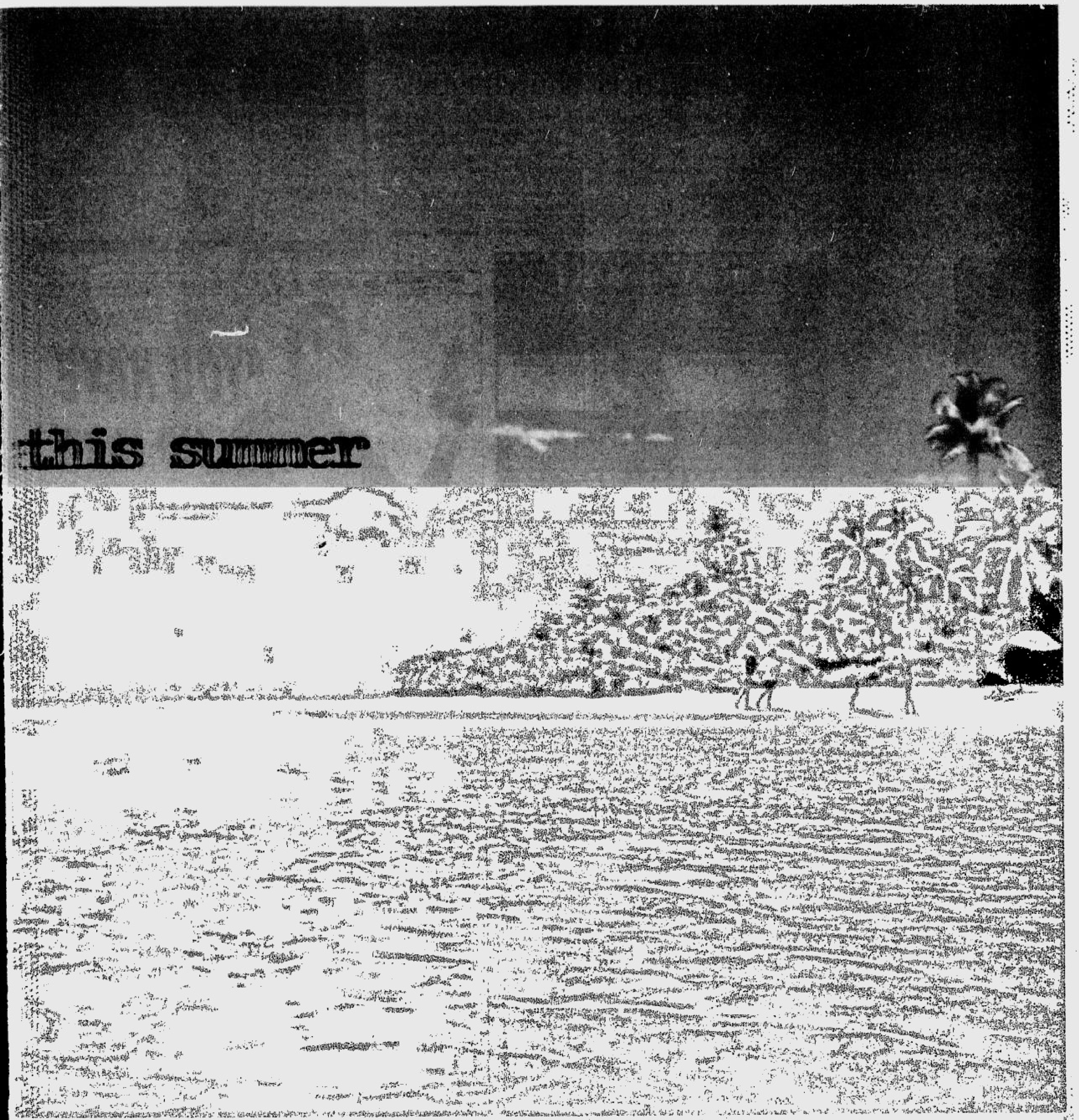
Gentxt @ Bantayan Island, Cebu

Join the Summer Sabbatical at Budyong Beach Resort!

Apr 16-18, 11am - 6pm: Chillout & Latin Grooves
*Free henna tattoo for all Gentxters
Apr 19, 9pm: Party with Cebu's Beach Band, Johnnie, Stage Crew and Cebu's top DJ's

B 1 OF US!

call 730-1000 or come to any of our events and get FREE registration



SPORTS

APR5-27

adidas Streetball Challenge 2003 presented by Gentxt

Slam'n jam with some of the country's top amateur ballers.

- Apr 5: St. Louis Univ., Baguio
- Apr 5-6: Robinson's, Sta. Rosa
- Apr 12: Divine Word Coll., Legazpi
- Apr 25-27: Robinson's, San Fernando

APR5-27
Sat- Sun

Gentxt National Beach Football Cup

Feel the football fever as the country's top varsity college and amateur clubs take this one of a kind tournament on tour!

- Apr 5-6: Luzon Cup, Subic
- Apr 12-13: Visayas Cup, Boracay
- April 26-27: Mindanao Cup, GenSan
- May 3-4: National Championship, Boracay

APR6-13

Manila Youth Games @ Rizal Memorial Complex

Watch 10,000 of Manila's best young athletes compete in 12 different sports as they help build a strong, healthy and peaceful community this summer.

APR17-19
Thu-Sat

Gentxt @ Puerto Galera

It's sun and sports in the sand with LIGA SMB!

April 17, 2pm:	Water Basketball, Three-point Shootout, Slam Dunk
8pm:	Acoustic Night feat. K24-7
April 18, 3pm:	Water Basketball, Basketball Relay, Three-point Shootout
8pm:	Chillout Session feat. Manila's coolest DJ's under Mindoro's star-filled sky
April 19, 4pm:	Slam Dunk & Water Basketball Championships
8pm:	Party with True Faith, The Dawn and K24-7

ENTERTAINMENT

APR11
Friday
6 PM

The JAG Show @ Glorietta Activity Center

Summer sizzles in style in a night of fun and fashion.

APR11
Friday
10 PM

Loud in Style @ Hard Rock Cafe, Makati

Move to the sounds of DJ Lisa Loud of the UK and the Space Dolls of Australia.

*Free entrance for the first 200 Gentxters

APR4,11 & 25
Friday
9 PM

Gentxt Nights @ DISH, Rockwell Power Plant

Featuring Barbie's Cradle (Apr 4) and Paolo Santos (Apr 11 & 25) and Pido with Take One. Unwind with songs to soothe your soul this summer.

- Flash your Gentxt card and get free entrance and a free drink
- VIP area for the first 100 Gentxters

APR28
Monday
8 PM

XMEN 2 Premiere @ Onstage, Greenbelt 1

Gentxt brings you mutant madness at its best in this exclusive advanced screening!

- First 400 Gentxters to register at the venue at 6pm get one free ticket each

making great things possible Globe HANDYPHONE

Jamie performs in 'Mysteria Lucis' church tour

"MYSTERIA Lucis (Mysteries of Light)," Star Records' contribution to the Catholic world's celebration of the Year of the Holy Rosary, was recently launched in a nationwide tour.

The tour kicked off last April 3 at the Mount Carmel Parish Church in New Manila, Quezon City. Highlight of the event was a special performance by Jamie Rivera of "Awit sa Ina ng Santo Rosario," one of the cuts on the album and the official hymn of the Year of the Holy Rosary.

RIVERA. Spreading the gospel through music.

Other performances are on April 24, 5 p.m. at the Santuario del Santo Cristo Church and May 1, 4:30 p.m. at the Sacred Heart Parish Church.

Another highlight of the tour is the unveiling and exhibition of the "Mysteries of Light" paintings by Fr. Armand Tangi. The paintings depict the five new "Mysteries of Light"–Jesus' baptism in the Jordan, the wedding at Cana, the proclamation of the Kingdom of God, Jesus' transfiguration and the institution of the Holy Eucharist.

According to Jamie, the objective of the church tour is to drum up interest and awareness among Catholics of the Luminous Mysteries or the "Mysteries of Light."

"This is part of the effort of Star Records to spread the news about the 'Mysteries of Light,'" explains Jamie. "The album makes it easy for people to pray the rosary, since it includes a narration by radio DJ Peter Musngi explaining the 'Mysteries of Light.' Former President Corazon Aquino and Fr. Patrick Peyton also lead the recitation of the new 'Mysteries of Light' on the album."

Jamie, who co-produced the "Mysteria Lucis" album, is pleased at the reaction of the public. She has, in fact, dedicated her career to spreading the word of God through music.

Boob-tube ...

From page A25

Host: What for? Will you travel?

Guest: No, it's a medical reason. I'm getting operation from my leg.

(Ouch!)

***

Host: I hear you have a crush on (name of starlet)?

Guest: Well, I admit, I like her.

Host: What makes her so special to you?

Guest: It's because she look like *sosyal*.

(Ouch *na naman*!)

***

Host: What do you want to say to (starlet)? It's her 18th birthday today?

Guest: Happy, happy birthday! You're 18—a semi-woman already!

(What in the world is a semi-woman—a hermaphrodite?!)

The movies they're making

"EXORCIST: The beginning." The prequel to "The Exorcist," much awaited here because it stars "our very own" **Billy Crawford**. The priest-protagonist meets Satan in Africa.

"Gigli": Real-life sweethearts **Jennifer Lopez** and **Ben Affleck** in a film romance involving the Mob.

"Hollywood Homicide." **Harrison Ford** and **Josh Hartnett** play cops who try to solve murders involving a rap group.

"American Wedding." **Jason Biggs** (of "American Pie" "fame") gets married to **Alyson Hannigan**.

"Bruce Almighty." **Jim Carrey** complains to God (**Morgan Freeman**), and is granted divine powers. Trouble is, will he know what to do with them?

"Legally Blonde 2: Red, White & Blonde." **Reese Witherspoon** shifts her legal practice to Washington, D.C.—and the seat of the USA's government is never the same again.

"Seabiscuit." The title character is the famous horse who won so many races during the Depression. **Tobey Maguire** plays a jockey, and **Chris Cooper** and **Jeff Bridges** co-star.

"The Wedding Party." **Michael Douglas** and **Albert Brooks** play the fathers of the bride and groom, respectively.

"Once Upon a Time in Mexico." **Antonio Banderas** portrays El Mariachi, a notorious gunslinger. **Salma Hayek** co-stars.

(To be concluded.)

POWER PLANT
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DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

SOLARIS R13 1:30,3:40,5:50, 8:00,10:10	WHAT A GIRL WANTS GP 1:30,3:40,5:50, 8:00,10:10	WILD THORNBERRYS GP 11:40,1:40,3:40, 5:40,7:40,9:40
NATIONAL SECURITY P13 12:10,2:10,4:10, 6:10,8:10,10:10	KANGAROO JACK GP 1:25,3:35,5:45, 7:55,10:00	THE RECRUIT P13 12:40, 3:05, 5:30, 7:55, 10:20

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CINEMA 2	NATIONAL SECURITY 11:00, 1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 9:50 P13

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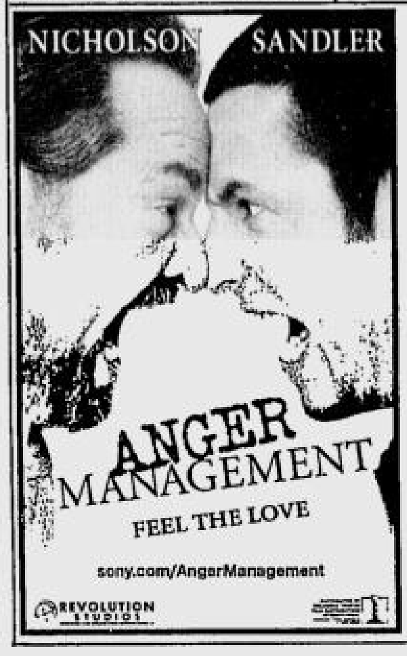

MTRCB ▶ R-13 Strictly for 13 years of age and up

Adam Sandler, Jack Nicholson offer non-stop laughs in fun, new comedy

In the No. 1 comedy in America, Adam Sandler and Jack Nicholson star together for the first time as patient and therapist -- though at times it's hard to tell which one is which!

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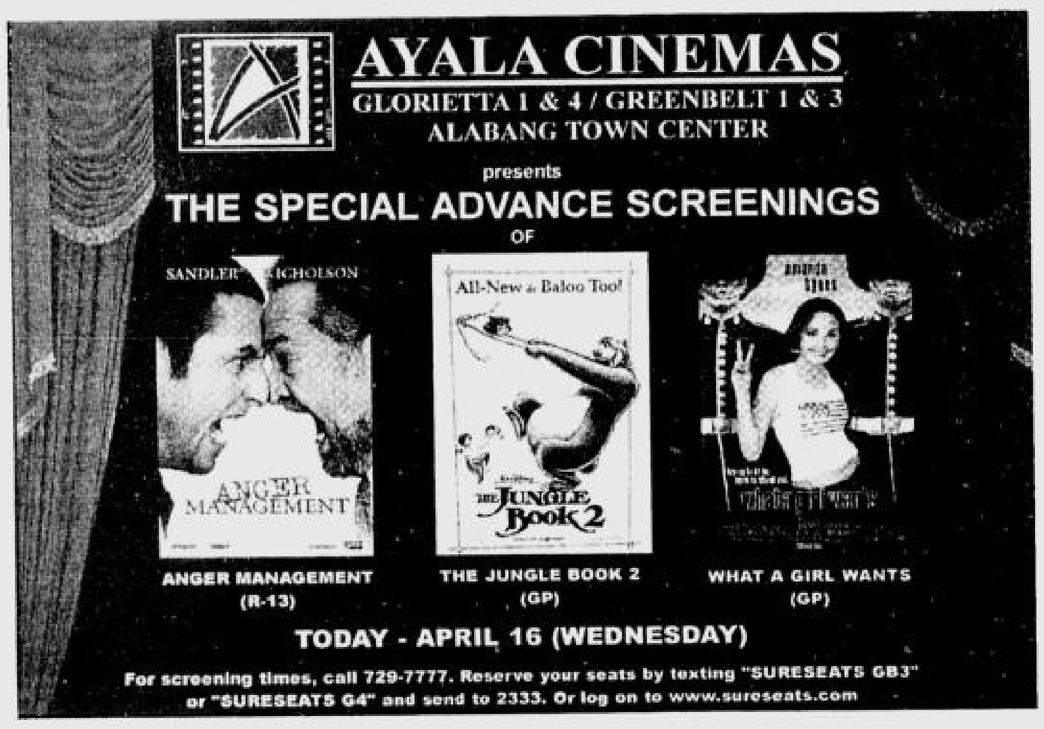
With surprise appearances by top celebrities.

OPENS APRIL 23 !



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OF
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If you think revenge is sweet... taste this.
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JOHNNY ENGLISH
MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)
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VIVA INTERNATIONAL PICTURES
OPENS AT ALL AYALA CINEMAS ON APRIL 19

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"YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHO YOU'RE DEALING WITH"
JOHNNY ENGLISH
PREPARE FOR BRITISH INTELLIGENCE
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VIVA INTERNATIONAL PICTURES
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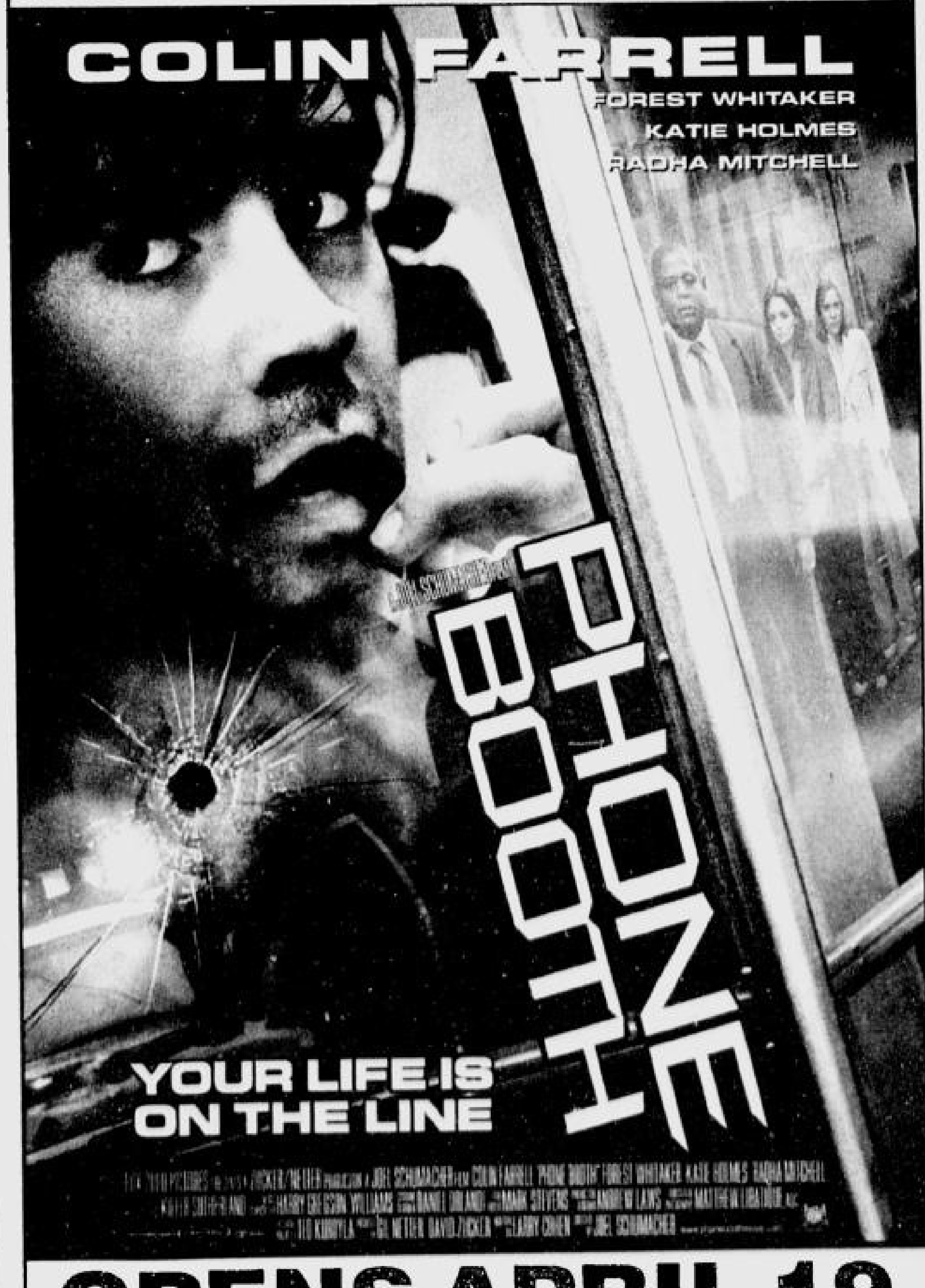


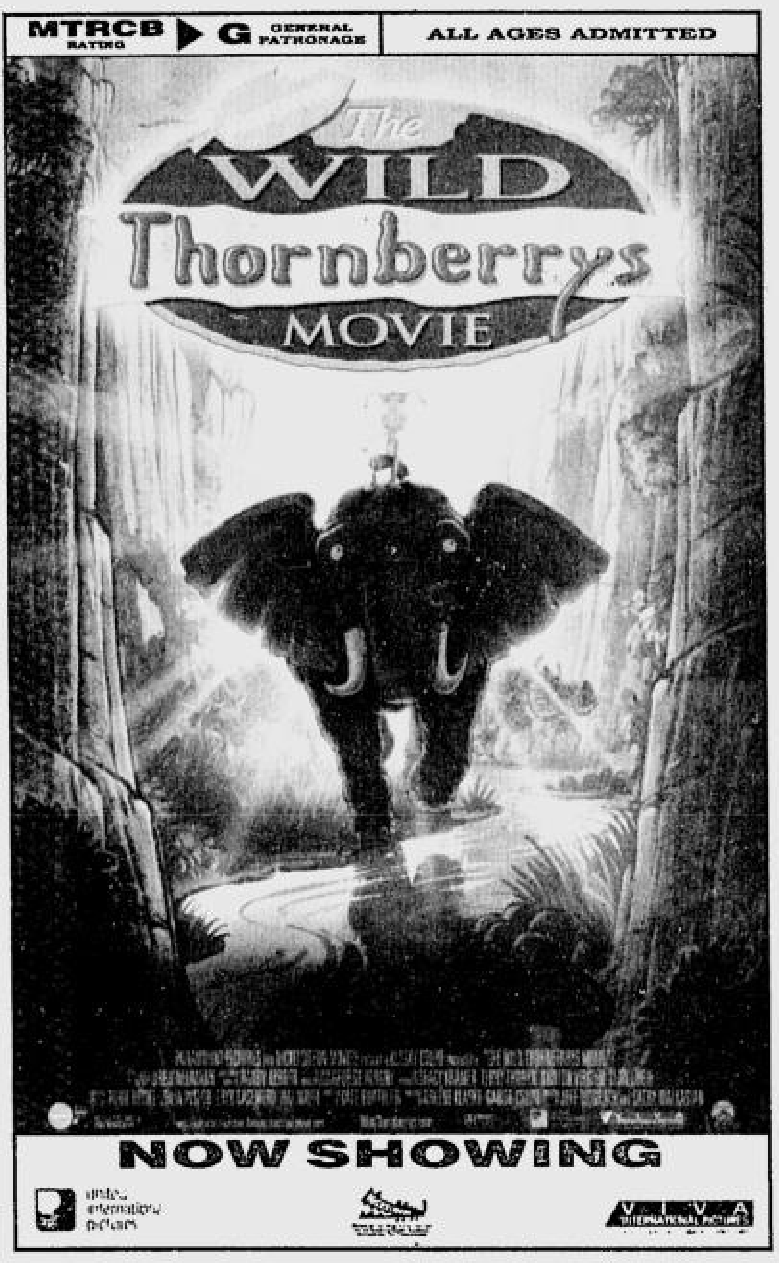
R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGES AND UP
COLIN FARRELL
FOREST WHITAKER
KATIE HOLMES
RADHA MITCHELL
YOUR LIFE IS ON THE LINE
OPENS APRIL 19

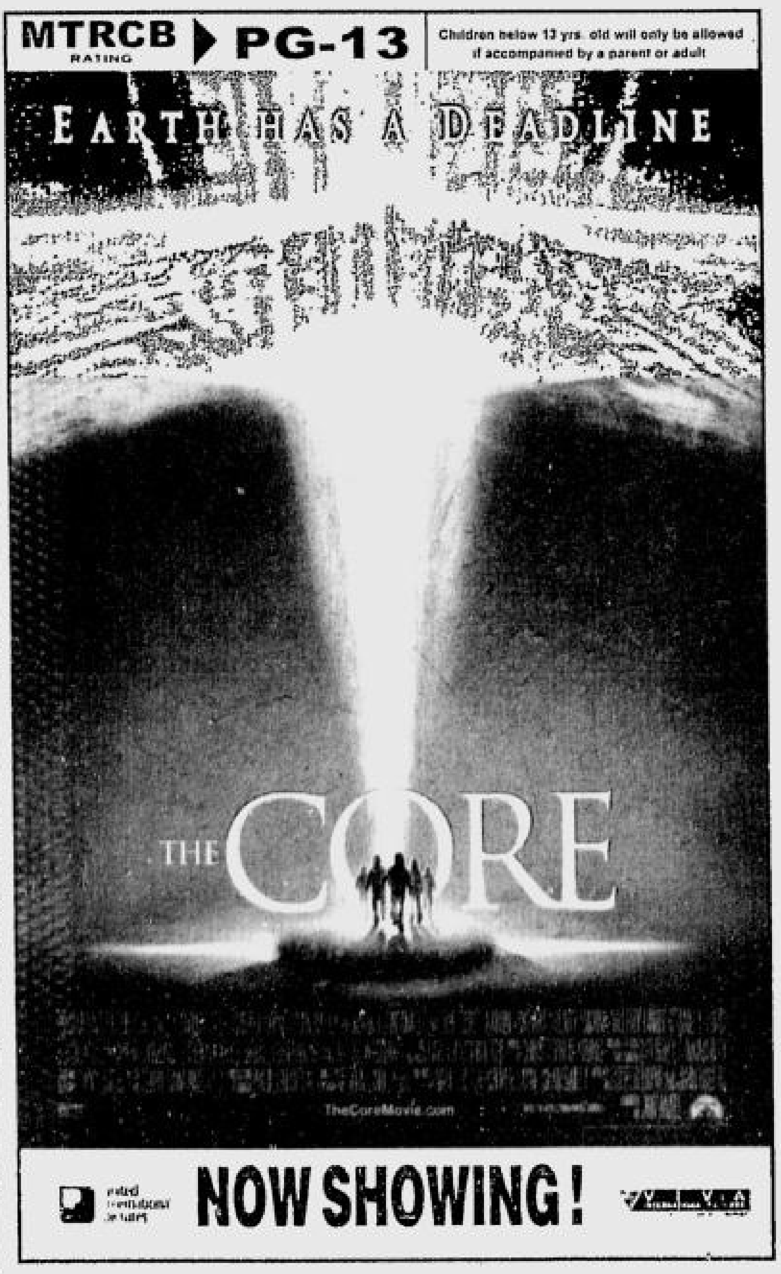
E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Louie C. Camino

MTRCB RATING: G-ALL AGES ADMITTED
amanda bynes
trying to fit in. born to stand out.
what a girl wants
OPENS APRIL 19


MTRCB RATING G GENERAL PATRONAGE
ALL AGES ADMITTED
The WILD Thornberrys MOVIE
NOW SHOWING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"A witty, delightful, sweet surprise."
amanda bynes
what a girl wants

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MARTIN LAWRENCE
STEVE ZAHN
NATIONAL SECURITY
They only look like cops.
SonyPictures.com

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THE PARTY STARTS ON APRIL 23!
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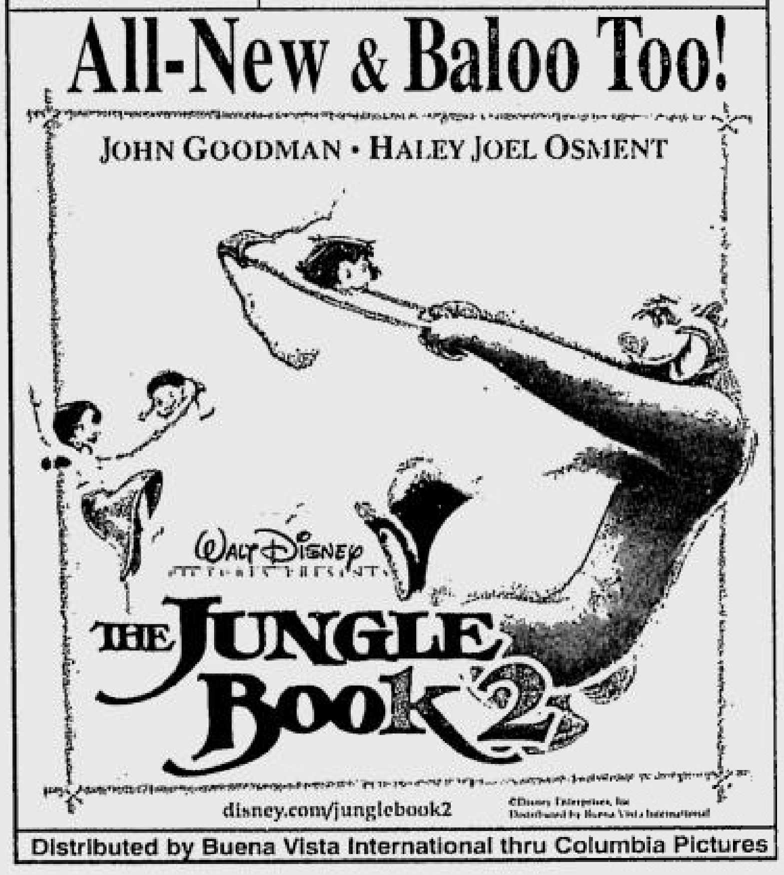
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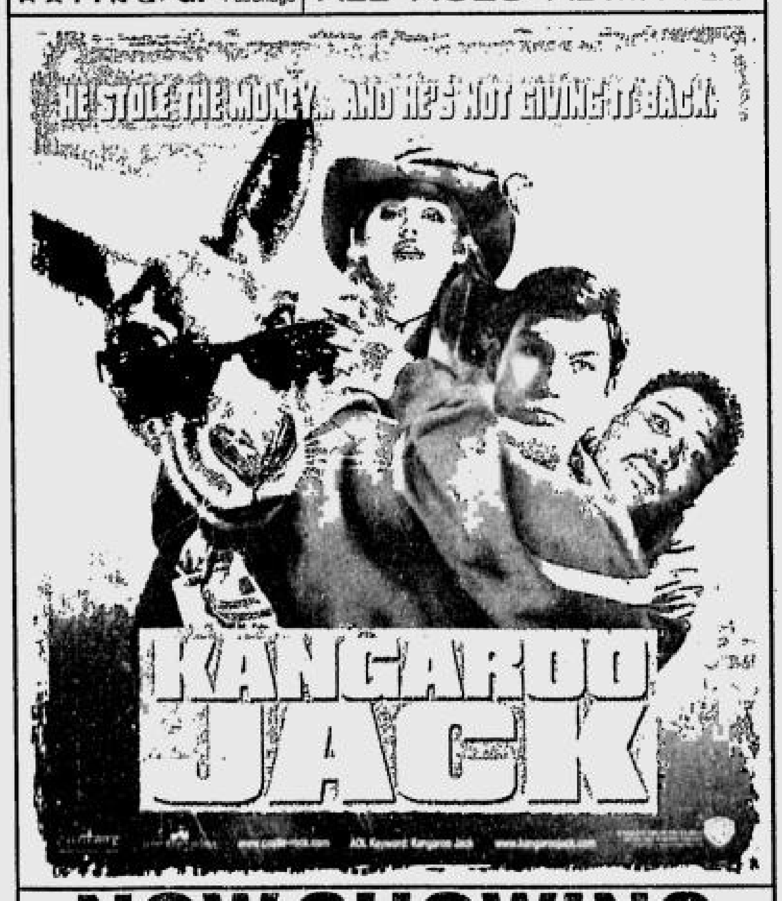

HE STOLE THE MONEY... AND HE'S NOT GIVING IT BACK.
KANGAROO JACK
NOW SHOWING

Boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: The traffic problem continues to make both motorists and passengers feel frustrated. Don't you have a specific plan to finally solve this very frustrating problem?

Guest: Of course we have. Once our research is completed, after the statistics have been analyzed, we will have a detailed plan, we will finalize it, and after that, we will implement the whatever.

(Thank you, sir, that's so—specific!)

***

Co-host: You're a wonderful singer!

Contestant: Thank you!

Co-host: *Nakapikit akong nanonood sa iyo kanina-ang galing mo!*

(*Nakapikit na nanonood?* That's quite a trick!)

***

Host: How did you get to be such a great singer?

Contestant: I do a lot of pactice. Pactice and pactice, that's the only way to succeed. After all, pactice makes perfect!

(Uh—more pactice!)

***

Host: Now that you have performed your number so well, what are your thoughts?

Contestant: I sincerely believe, win or lose, only this the beginning!

(Ah, please repeat—in the proper word order?)

***

Host: *Kanino mo inaalay ang kanta mo?*

Contestant: *Sa mga* viewers *diyan sa kanilang* television sets.

(*Saan?!*)

***

Host: *May* question *ako sa iyo.*

Contestant: Yes, *po?*

Host: *Ano ang gagawin mo 'pag ikaw ang napili bilang* award?

(Don't answer that—please!)

***

Host: What are your career plans this year?

Guest: I will make a movie—but first, I will take three months off.

BOOB-TUBE/ A24

Araneta Center

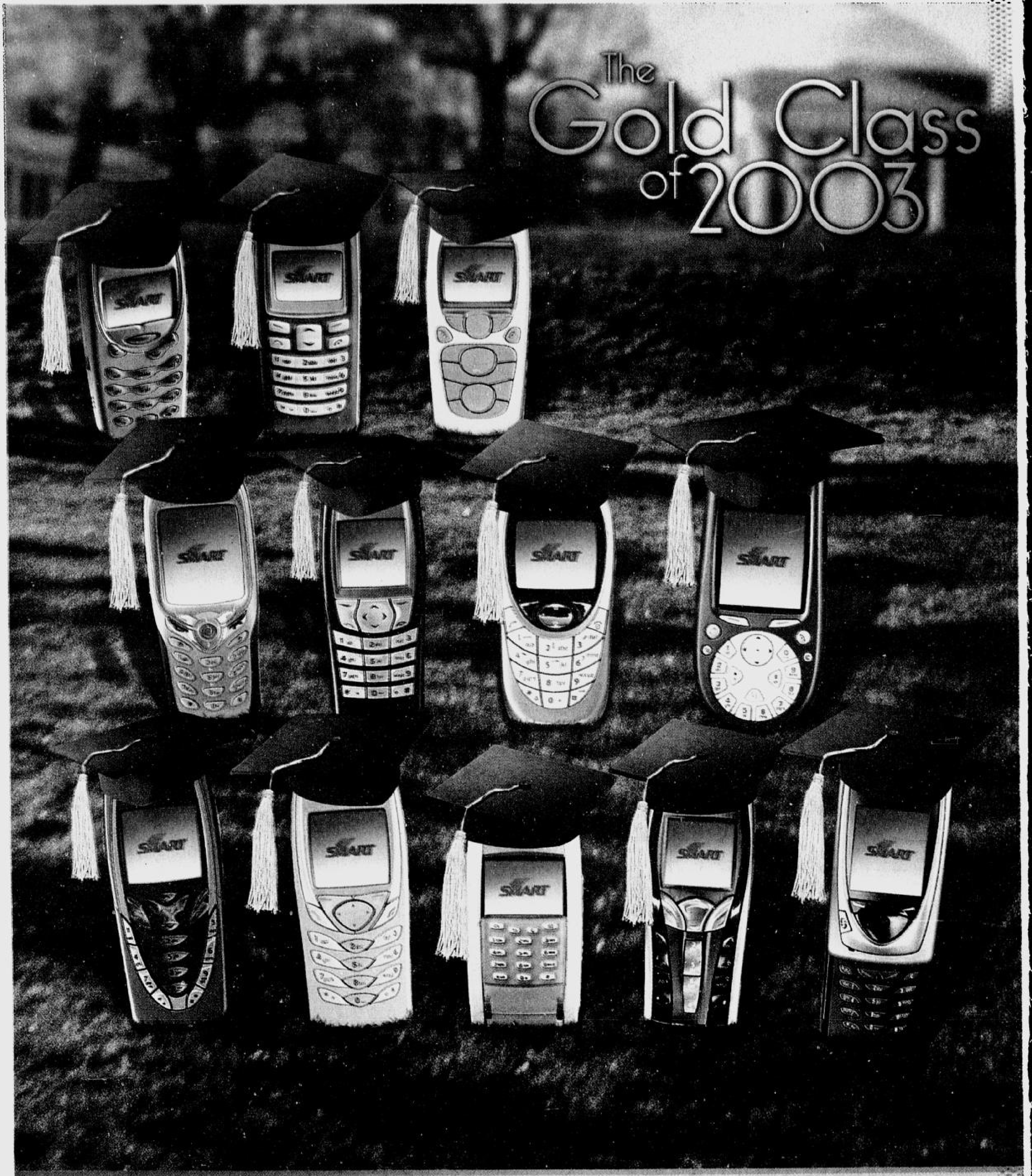
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7	
Ali 1	SEX DRIVE
Ali 2	TEARS OF THE SUN
Ali 3	NATIONAL SECURITY
Ali 4	THE CORE
Ali 5	KANGAROO JACK
Ali 6	SOLARIS
Ali 7	THE RECRUIT
FARMERS PLAZA CINEMAS	
Farmers 1	SEX DRIVE
Farmers 2	WILLARD
ARANETA COLISEUM	
APR 17 & 18	SHALOM
APR 20	PBA GAMES
APR 21 & 23	NCA 7 COCK DERBY
ELEPHANT WORLD	
	ELEPHANT EASTER
	PARADE - SUNDAY
	APRIL 20 4PM

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	MATAMIS HANGGANG DULO/BETTER THAN SEX
ODEON	THE CORE
ODEON-2	BUSINESS FOR PLEASURE/KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ROBEN	SEX DRIVE
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	[illegible]
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	HAPPY HOUR
CORONET B	VIRGIN PEOPLE III
QUEZON-1	VIRGIN PEOPLE
REMAR	SEX DRIVE
REMAR-2	CORY QUIRINO STORY
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	YOU & ME AGAINST THE WORLD
B	RAMPADORA
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	WHAT A GIRL WANTS
CINEMA-2	KANGAROO JACK
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	PALABAN
CINEMA-2	VIRGIN PEOPLE 3
CINEMA-3	HAPPY HOUR
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	RECRUIT
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	WISH MASTER
CINEMA-6	SEX DRIVE
CINEMA-7	PARU PARONG LIGAW
CINEMA-8	ASTERIX & OBELIX
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SOLARIS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	KANGAROO JACK
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	NATIONAL SECURITY
CINEMA-12	WILD THORNBERRY S
CINEMA-14	THE CORE
CINEMA-15	WILLARD
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
CINEMA 1	DIE ANOTHER DAY
CINEMA 2	BAHID
CINEMA 3	HARRY POTTER
CINEMA 4	[illegible]
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

SEE IT FIRST!
SM CINEMA
Advance Screening
Invitational
DWTM Premiere
on April 16, 2003
7:30 pm
SM Megamall
Cinema 3
SUBJECT TO MTRCB RATING
Regular showing on April 19, 2003
at the SM CINEMAS
HE WAS TOUGH WITH A BADGE
NOW HE'S TOUGHER WITHOUT ONE.
THE STAR OF "TRIPLE XXX"
VIN DIESEL
A MAN APART



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Nokia 2100	1,000	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
Nokia 3530	3,000	2,000	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE	FREE
SMART Amazing Phone	18,750	16,500	14,250	6,000	FREE	FREE	FREE
Nokia 6610	14,000	13,000	12,000	3,000	FREE	FREE	FREE
Nokia 7210	19,000	18,000	17,000	8,000	3,000	FREE	FREE
Nokia 6100	19,000	18,000	17,000	8,000	3,000	FREE	FREE
Nokia 6610 (w/digicam/headset)	17,000	15,000	14,000	10,000	5,000	FREE	FREE
Nokia 7210 (w/digicam/headset)	20,000	18,000	17,000	12,500	8,000	2,500	FREE
Nokia 6100 (w/digicam/headset)	21,500	19,500	18,500	14,000	10,000	4,000	FREE
Nokia 3650	20,000	19,000	18,000	9,000	4,000	FREE	FREE
Nokia 7650	20,000	19,000	18,000	9,000	4,000	2,500	FREE
Nokia 7250	20,000	19,000	18,000	9,000	4,000	2,000	FREE
Siemens S57	15,000	13,000	12,000	7,500	3,000	FREE	FREE
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SPIKE IN OIL PRICES

Two-month trade deficit hits $319M

THE PHILIPPINES posted a trade deficit of $93 million in February, lower than the $226 million deficit in January, the National Statistics Office said on Tuesday.

However, the total trade deficit of $319 million for the first two months of the year was way off the $850-million surplus recorded in the same period last year.

"There was a temporary spike in the fuel bill with the higher crude oil prices. There should be some relief on that front going forward," said David Cohen, research head at MMS International.

"There's hope that the export picture will firm up again in the upcoming months, in part as the uncertainty surrounding the Iraq war clears up."

Leading up to the war in Iraq in March, oil companies were asked by the government to boost their supplies in case prices shot up and supplies became scarce. The Philippines sources all its crude oil requirements abroad.

Total imports in February stood at $2.817 billion, down slightly from the $2.917 billion in January but 21.4 percent higher than the $2.32 billion a year earlier.

Electronics and components accounted for 27.7 percent of the import bill in February at $780.4 million, higher than the $611.6 million a year earlier and the $754.58 million in January.

The rise in electronics imports should translate into good news for future exports as many of the items are assembled into semiconductors and computer parts for shipment overseas.

Mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials accounted for 13 percent of the import bill in February, surging to $364.69 million from $184.88 million a year earlier and $329.22 million in January.

Revisions to full-year 2002 data imply figures for January of that year can no longer be regarded as accurate. The NSO is due to release the revised historical data later this month.

The Philippines has said its 2002 current account surplus could evaporate after initial adjustments to trade data showed imports were $2 billion to $3 billion higher than previously reported. *Reuters*

Past due credit card loans still rising

By Clarissa S. Batino

SOURED credit card loans swelled to more than 26 percent of the P54.197 billion in receivables of banks and credit card companies by the end of 2002. The amount was more than the previous year's past due ratio of 22.48 percent of total receivables placed at P47.614 billion.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas data showed that banks and other institutions engaged in the credit card business continued to incur non-performing loans.

The ratio of soured loans recorded in the credit card business was more than 10 points higher than the ratio of the total non-performing loans recorded by commercial banks of 15.08 percent of total loans as of February.

There are 16 commercial banks, six credit card subsidiaries and 11 thrift banks engaged in the credit card business.

In the same period, the banks' auto loan exposure rose 22.4 percent to P42.2 billion in end-2002 from P34.5 billion in the previous year.

Past due auto loans increased to P2.6 billion as of December last year from P2.1 billion in end-2001. The amount was equivalent to 6.1 percent of the total auto loans extended by banks during the period.

The BSP computes the past due ratio based on loans that remain unpaid starting the day after the due date. The Credit Card Association of the Philippines has been contesting the central bank's computation saying that most credit companies worldwide consider an account past due only when it remains unpaid 31 days after the due date.

Commercial banks remained the biggest players in the credit card business, accounting for 64.9 percent of the total receivables, followed by their subsidiaries with 31 percent of the pie. Thrift banks account for the remaining 4.1 percent.

A central bank official noted that proper credit investigation was still the key to prudent banking operations.

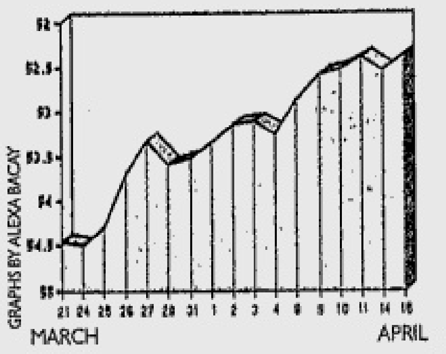
Last year, monetary authorities ordered banks to tighten the screening of credit card applications after it noticed an increase in the banks' past due loans.

The central bank had also cautioned credit card companies against the imposition of exorbitant rates although the association had assured that studies were being done to bring down interest rates.

Credit card companies charge about 3.25 percent monthly or about 40 percent per annum.

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 52.375 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 15, 2003

¥ 120.46 = $1

As of 5 p.m., April 15, 2003

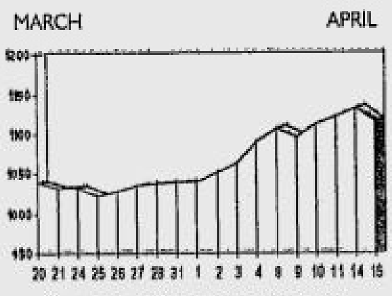
GOLD: $323.60-324.10

per ounce Hong Kong, April 15, 2003

STOCK MARKET

Stocks drop 1.49% on profit-taking

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B2)

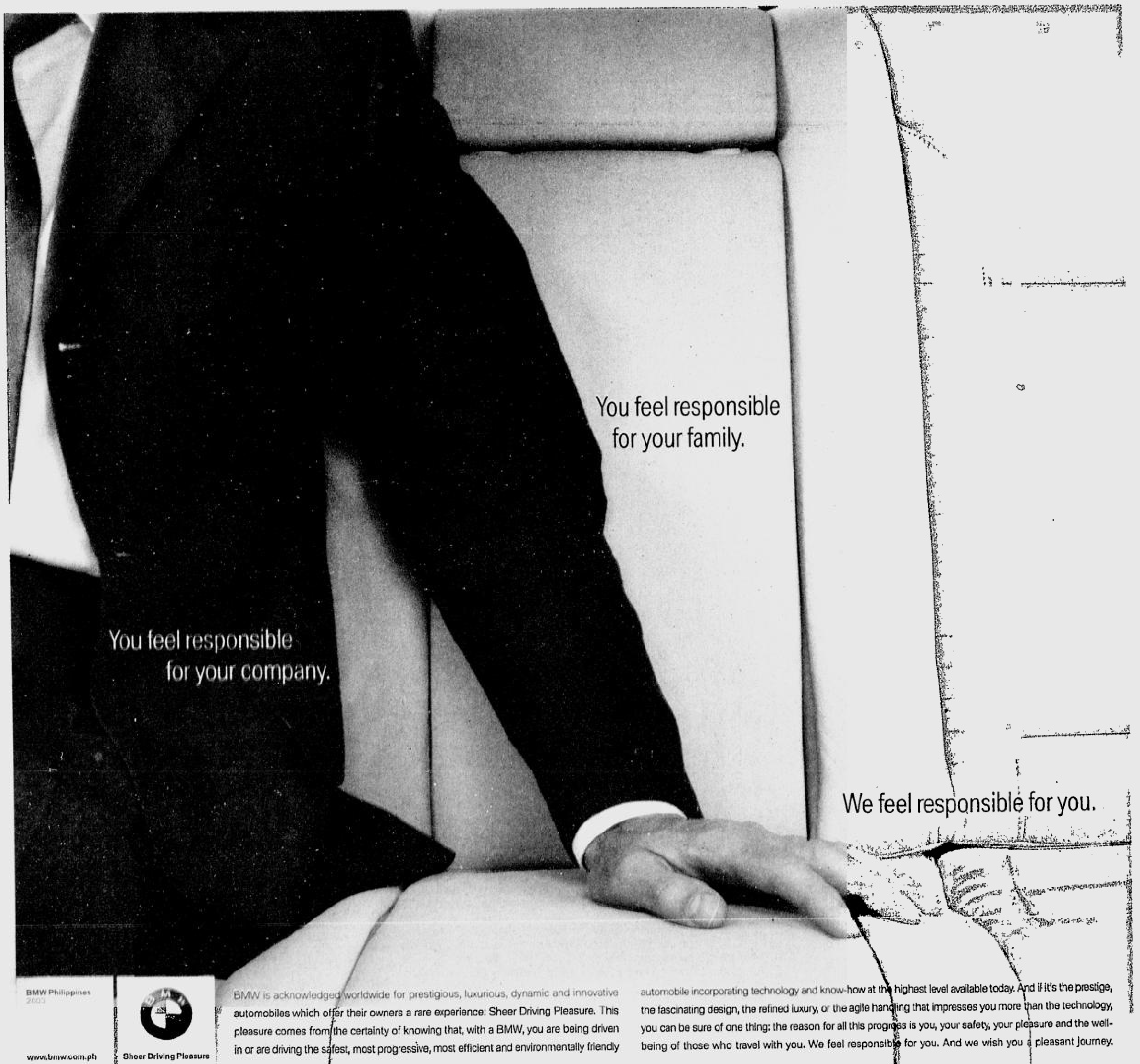
LOCAL stocks broke a three-day rally yesterday as profit taking emerged, despite positive news that US pension fund Calpers kept the country on its investment list.

But the move by Calpers may still inspire buying after the Easter holidays which starts from Wednesday for government workers, analysts said.

Hopes for higher company earnings in the first quarter may also trigger buying, they said.

Calpers, the No. 1 US pension fund, on Monday decided to keep the Philippines on its investment portfolio but gave the country one year to improve its practices.

STOCKS/ B3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CalPERS report a much-needed shot in the arm for PSE—Leung

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE HEAD of the Philippine Stock Exchange hailed yesterday a decision by the United States' biggest pension fund to retain the Philippines on its list of "permissible" investment sites but stressed that "there are still a lot of things to be done."

"That should be a positive sign for other investors since CalPERS (California Public Employees' Retirement System) is a significant source of investments. But one should not be complacent because there are still a lot of things to be done," PSE president Ernest Leung said in an interview.

"We'd like to see the country stronger in terms of overall attractiveness to investors," he said.

CalPERS has given the Philippines a one-year "cure period" to wait for reforms that it says the country needs to carry out to permanently qualify as a favored investment destination.

Wilshire Investment Consulting Services recommended in February that CalPERS remove the Philippines from its investment list, but last-minute appeals by local finance officials convinced the US pension fund to give the country 60 days from Feb. 18 to argue why it should be retained as a "permissible investment site."

CalPERS only has about $30 million invested in the Philippines, but its actions influence the decisions of other financial firms. It manages around $133 billion in assets, with about $1.8 billion in emerging markets like the Philippines.

Leung commended CalPERS for giving the Philippines a chance to correct reporting inaccuracies that led to Wilshire's negative recommendation.

"CalPERS is a professionally run organization, and the fact that they were prepared to open themselves up to the perspective that their financial adviser has downgraded on the basis of poor information shows that they are trying their best to place funds well for the benefit of their members," he said.

"I just hope that Wilshire Consulting will value this as a way of improving the way it's doing its homework rather than being vindictive," the PSE chief said.

Stock market investors, however, shrugged off news of CalPERS' decision to retain the Philippines on its list of investment sites.

LEUNG: Still a lot of things to be done.

Exec wants to hire new consultant

By Clarissa S. Batino

SAN FRANCISCO Mayor Ronald Brown has asked fellow directors of the California Public Employees' Retirement System to hire a new consultant that will review the Philippines' status as an investment site.

Persons familiar with the matter disclosed that Brown abstained from voting on the Philippines during a board meeting and instead sought a review of the rating that Wilshire Investment Consulting Services gave the Philippines.

CalPERS has given the Philippines a one-year "cure period" to wait for reforms that it says the country needs to carry out to permanently qualify as a favored investment destination.

Wilshire recommended in February that CalPERS remove the Philippines from its investment list, but last-minute appeals by local finance officials convinced the US pension fund to give the country 60 days from Feb. 18 to argue why it should be retained as a "permissible investment site."

Brown asked CalPERS' board to put on record that "if it is determined that there was a lack of objectivity in Wilshire's analysis of the Philippines, then the CalPERS board should not be precluded, in any way, from engaging another consultant to review the Philippines' score."

Pension fund adds watchlist to policy

SACRAMENTO, California—CalPERS said on Monday it would, in the future, wait a year for possible reforms before cutting off investment in emerging-market countries that would no longer meet its criteria.

The Philippines was the only country given the year under the new watch-list policy adopted on Monday by the board of the California Public Employees' Retirement System.

"We have adopted a cure period that allows countries whose scores have fallen to work with us to improve their practices," said CalPERS spokesman Brad Pacheco. "This action sends a message to countries that our door is open for them to work with us."

CalPERS had already decided to keep the Philippines, whose finance secretary personally appealed to the $131-billion pension fund's board, on its list of acceptable markets.

But Malaysia and Thailand, dropped from the list in February at the same time as the Philippines, will not be given the year to reform.

The Philippines has argued that data inaccuracies may have led to its poor grading by the consulting firm hired by CalPERS, Wilshire Investment Consulting Services.

In February, CalPERS also ruled out investing in such large countries as China, India and Indonesia.

CalPERS, which can set the tone for other institutional investors, based its decisions on criteria that include civil liberties, accounting standards, labor law and market transparency. *Reuters*

BIR tax take still short by P710M

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue reported yesterday its collection in March fell P710 million short of its P29.9-billion target, raising its first-quarter shortfall to some P4.1 billion.

In a statement, Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno expressed confidence the BIR would still meet its year-round target of P424 billion despite the shortfall.

He said reforms to improve revenues and deal with tax evaders were beginning to take root.

The BIR undertook on April 2 a tax mapping and saturation drive in seven key areas in Metro Manila. It discovered that 95 percent of the business establishments it visited were committing various violations of the country's tax laws.

Tasked to collect 80 percent of the government's revenues, the BIR must meet its target to help the government contain its budget deficit this year to P202 billion. The bureau is expected to collect some P47.423 billion this month.

Last year, the poor performance of the BIR and the Bureau of Customs were blamed for the government's failure to keep its deficit below P130 billion. The deficit ended the year at P210.7 billion.

Meralco appoints two debt handlers

THE MANILA Electric Co. has appointed Citibank NA and BPI Capital Corp. to come up with ways for it to cut its debts.

In a disclosure yesterday, Meralco said it would further reduce capital expenditures and cut expenses to meet its debt obligations.

The company had total outstanding debts of about P70.2 billion at the end of 2002.

"The company has already severely limited its capital expenditures in the past years and is prepared to further curtail capital expenditures to the barest minimum possible and implement reductions in its operating expenses in support of the comprehensive liability management plan," Meralco said.

Meralco, which created a six-man special committee to draft its debt plan, said it was also awaiting the outcome of its appeal before the Energy Regulatory Commission on the body's decision granting a rate hike that was lower than what Meralco wanted.

The commission originally granted a hike of 18 centavos per kilowatt-hour but reduced the amount to 5.40 centavos following an audit report.

But the biggest blow came on April 10, when the Supreme Court stood by its decision that Meralco had overbilled its customers for years and asked for a refund that reportedly could reach P28 billion.

"Meralco has undertaken and continues to undertake measures to enable it to meet its obligations, specifically with the ruling of the Supreme Court upholding an earlier ERC decision to roll back rates by 16.7 centavos and to refund to customers amounts previously collected," the company said. Doris C. Dumlao and Reuters

Equitable predicts double-digit growth

EQUITABLE PCI Bank will likely post double-digit growth this year on the back of an expansion in loans and an increase in fee-based income, bank president Rene Buenaventura said yesterday.

In a news briefing following the bank's annual stockholders' meeting, Buenaventura said the first-quarter results were encouraging, as it showed Equitable was on track to reaching its profit target.

"Loans were up, though not as much as we had targeted. We also saw an increase in fee-based income, and we managed our expenses through automation," Buenaventura disclosed.

The bank's main initiatives this year would be to raise between $100 million and $150 million in tier-two capital, he said.

This will bring Equitable's capital adequacy ratio up by at least 200 basis points, he said.

Buenaventura said the tier-two issue would likely happen this quarter, as the resolution of the US-Iraq war and recovery of global markets had also led to higher demand for Philippine debt papers.

He said the timing of the roadshows for the issue, however, would depend on Equitable's lead arrangers—Deutsche Bank AG and UBS Warburg. Hong Kong and Singapore would be the main markets, he said.

Buenaventura also said the bank was targeting to repeat last year's success in cutting its nonperforming loans by again bringing down the level of its bad loans by P5 billion.

"We are targeting to bring it down to P20 billion from P25 billion to P20 billion (by the end of this year) through resolutions, collections and possibly foreclosures," he said.

He said Equitable did not expect to provide any additional loan loss provisions this year unless more borrowers defaulted.

DISCLOSURES

BANKARD Inc. has bought 94,000 of its own shares at P1.42 each. This is in line with the company's program to buy back 50 million shares at prevailing market prices.

***

MANILA Electric Co. has announced the resignation of Juan Luis Cardenete as a director. Emilio Vicens has replaced Cardenete.

***

CORRO-Coat Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 9, 2 p.m., at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club. Stockholders as of May 17 are entitled to vote at the meeting.

***

PILIPINO Telephone Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 15, 10 a.m., at Auditorium A of the Bonifacio Centre-I in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig. Only stockholders as of March 17 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

***

MABUHAY Holdings Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 9, 10 a.m., at the New World Hotel in Makati. Only stockholders as of March 12 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

***

SUN Life Financial Services of Canada Inc. has disclosed the appointment of Candace Shaw as vice president for corporate investments and Ronald Friesen as vice president for tax and corporate capital. Others who had a change in their titles were Christine Mackiw, now vice president and chief compliance officer; and, William Minucci and Michael McLoughlin, now both vice president and associate general counsel. Claude Accum, Thomas Clulow and Jane Smale ceased to be officers of the company *Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research*

GMA reports 65% growth in first-quarter revenue

By Elena R. Torrijos

GMA Network Inc. reported yesterday that its gross revenue in the first quarter year went up 65 percent to P1.19 billion from last year on higher ratings chalked up by its programs.

The country's second-largest television network announced in a statement that its net income after tax for the quarter reached over P160 million, marking a turnaround from last year's first-quarter net loss of about P600,000.

GMA Network's estimated profit for the quarter was also larger than the tentative P107-million net income reported by its rival, ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.

GMA Network said its strong performance began last year, when its programs' ratings noticeably went up.

The higher ratings resulted in hefty increases in advertising loads, it said.

At the end of 2002, GMA Network's total gross revenue was worth around P4.23 billion, 21 percent better than in its 2001 report.

GMA Network's net income last year reached P406 million, 35 percent higher than its net income in 2001 and also higher than ABS-CBN's P166-million profit.

GMA Network chair, president and chief executive Felipe Gozon expressed optimism that the company would continue to perform better this year and could even achieve greater heights, as it continued to produce innovative programs with high production values.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of April 15, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	16	16.25	15.75	16.25	43,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	36	36	35	35	461,500
Citystate Savings Bank	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	26.5	26.5	26	26	16,600
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	28.5	29	28.5	28.5	224,400
Philippine National Bank	25	25	25	25	21,800
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	10	10	10	10	23,000
Security Bank Corp.	11.25	11.25	10.75	10.75	5,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	17	17	17	17	12,600
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.46	1.46	1.44	1.44	746,000
First Abacus Financial	0.9	0.93	0.68	0.9	400,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	3.25	3.25	2.6	3.05	625,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1330	1340	1330	1340	1,040
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1040	1040	1040	1040	2,460
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	16	16	15	15	94,200
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.8	0.8	0.75	0.75	10,870,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	645	645	630	630	13,800
Ipeople Inc.	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	100,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.034	0.034	0.034	0.034	2,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.019	0.02	0.019	0.02	1,600,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.35	0.35	3,250,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	400	400	380	382.5	172,240
Philweb Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	5,500,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	7.5	7.5	7.4	7.4	149,000
Manila Electric Co. B	11.25	11.25	10.5	10.75	859,900
Petron Corp.	2.08	2.1	2.04	2.08	7,968,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56	1,000
Trans-Asia Oil And Energy	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	100,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.5	1,210,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.6	2.65	2.55	2.55	719,000
Negros Navigation Co.Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	20,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUC	TS				
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.57	0.59	0.56	0.57	4,960,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.73	0.74	0.73	0.74	170,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.36	2.38	2.36	2.38	100,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.5	17	16.5	16.75	320,700
La Tondena Distillers Inc.	33.5	33.5	32.5	33	450,500
San Miguel Corp. A	57	57.5	57	57.5	47,900
San Miguel Corp. B	67	67	66.5	67	81,300
Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	110,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.34	0.35	0.34	0.35	100,000
Ayala Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.45	4.45	3,578,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.44	2.44	2.44	2.44	150,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.027	0.027	0.027	0.027	500,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.006	0.006	0.0055	0.0055	5,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.22	2.22	2.22	2.22	15,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.235	0.24	0.23	0.235	2,740,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	400,000
Dmci Holdings Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.24	0.245	4,430,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	8.4	8.4	8	8	219,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	230,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	300,000
Ionics Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	270,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	245,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	2,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.63	0.64	2,800,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	120,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.195	0.21	0.19	0.19	4,760,000
Music Corp.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	60,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.0725	0.075	0.07	0.075	1,400,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	7,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.18	1.2	123,000
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	30	37	30	37	3,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	6,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.35	2,150,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	30,000
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.4	150,000
Mondragon Intl Phils Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	950,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	210,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	15.5	15.5	14.75	15	495,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10	10	10	10	14,000
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10	10	10	10	1,000
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.0026	0.0026	0.0024	0.0024	8,000,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.2	5.3	2,287,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	300,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	500,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.18	2,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.04	0.97	0.98	6,182,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.06	0.06	0.044	0.05	400,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.3	4,710,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	8,000,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2	2	2	2	10,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.185	0.185	0.185	0.185	400,000
Ormco Corp.	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	28,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	100,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	1,500,000
Pacifica	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	23,000,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	2,585,700	32,114,245.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	82,323,540	181,475,950.00
PRO	16,379,000	43,879,100.00
Mining	36,510,000	272,400.00
OIL	24,500,000	251,000.00
GRAND TOTALS:	162,298,240	257,992,695.00

	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	364.98	DOWN 5.48
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,637.46	DOWN 21.09
PRO	478.25	DOWN 8.26
Mining	1,147.73	DOWN 2.94
OIL	1.32	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	684.05	UP 1.74
Composite	1,116.48	DOWN 16.89

CURRENCIES

April 15, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.928419	1.000000	52.444000
Japan	Yen	0.007712	0.008307	0.435700
United Kingdom	Pound	1.460774	1.573400	82.515400
Hongkong	Dollar	0.119040	0.128218	6.724300
Switzerland	Franc	0.667879	0.719373	37.726800
Canada	Dollar	0.638571	0.687805	36.071200
Singapore	Dollar	0.521437	0.561640	29.454600
Australia	Dollar	0.560301	0.603500	31.650000
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.462846	2.652731	139.119800
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.247585	0.266674	13.985500
Brunei	Dollar	0.519977	0.560067	29.372200
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000105	0.000113	0.005900
Thailand	Baht	0.021646	0.023315	1.222700
UAE	Dirham	0.252789	0.272279	14.279400
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.077100	56.487400
Argentina	Peso	0.317952	0.342466	17.960300
Brazil	REAL	0.292876	0.315457	16.543800
Denmark	Kroner	0.134637	0.145018	7.605300
India	Rupee	0.019599	0.021110	1.107100
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.244353	0.263193	13.802900
Mexico	New Peso	0.087257	0.093985	4.928900
New Zealand	Dollar	0.507832	0.546986	28.686100
Norway	Kroner	0.127057	0.136853	7.177100
Pakistan	Rupee	0.016085	0.017325	0.908600
South Africa	Rand	0.119179	0.128368	6.732100
Korea	Won	0.000759	0.000818	0.042900
Sweden	Kroner	0.109393	0.117827	6.179300
Syria	Pound	0.022106	0.023810	1.248700
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026764	0.028827	1.511800
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000582	0.000627	0.032900

INTEREST RATES

April 8, 2003—MART 1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 April 8, 2003 (%)	MART1 April 4, 2003 (%)
1 Month	7.8568	8.0108
3 Months	7.9773	7.9773
6 Months	8.6135	8.7019
1 Year	9.4846	9.5115
2 Years	10.5854	10.6844
3 Years	11.5519	11.5788
4 Years	12.425	12.4538
5 Years	12.6269	12.6154
7 Years	13.1577	13.1519
10 Years	13.2538	13.225
20 Years	13.5058	13.4865
25 Years	14.0346	14.0135

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

Bulk power users to get discounts worth 72¢/kWh

By Ronnel W. Domingo

IN a bid to boost demand for electricity, the National Power Corp. yesterday signed an agreement with National Transmission Corp. and Manila Electric Co. to give industries and commercial establishments discounts amounting to 72 centavos per kilowatt-hour on their electricity purchases.

Dubbed "Speed" or Special Program to Enhance Electricity Demand, the discount scheme is open to industrial and commercial power users operating within the franchise area of Meralco that consume at least 1,000 kWh of electricity a month.

Napocor explained that the discounts would apply on the customers' consumption above the average monthly demand.

The state-run 'power agency said the agreement pushed through after its board of directors approved a 50-centavo discount. Transco's management, meanwhile, gave the go-ahead for its 10-centavo share in the discount.

In a telephone interview, a Meralco official said the utility maintained its original proposal of a 12-centavo discount that it proposed when the Speed program was conceptualized a year ago.

"This means that the end-consumer would get a total discount of 72 centavos per kWh," he said. "They do not need to apply for the program because our records would show who are qualified, it's automatic."

Napocor figures show that some 900 commercial and industrial customers could benefit from the program, which would initially cover those with a minimum monthly demand of 1,000 kWh and operate within the Meralco franchise area covering Metro Manila, Rizal, Bulacan, Cavite, Rizal and parts of Laguna, Pampanga and Quezon.

The second phase would accommodate consumers with a minimum monthly demand of 500 kWh.

Speed encourages power-intensive businesses to extend production hours and shift schedules to take advantage of the lower electricity rates.

In September 2002, Napocor signed a memorandum of agreement with several distribution utilities and electric cooperatives for a nationwide implementation of the Speed program.

It was estimated that the discount for bulk users in Visayas and Mindanao could be pegged at 70 centavos per kWh and 10 centavos, respectively.

SARS seen to weaken growth in Asia

HONG KONG—International rating agency Standard and Poor's said yesterday that the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) would lower growth rates in much of Asia this year, with Hong Kong taking the brunt of the damage.

The agency said the virus has affected not just tourist arrivals and consumer spending, but also business operations and investments with the potential impact rising with each new case and death.

"Notwithstanding the gloom, the ratings on Asia-Pacific sovereigns should ride out the ravages of the virus, although it will add to governments' fiscal burdens," S&P said in a statement.

The rating agency said that although SARS does not appear as deadly as other diseases, it is affecting the way people interact, with many people choosing to avoid public places. In turn, this is harming confidence and consumption.

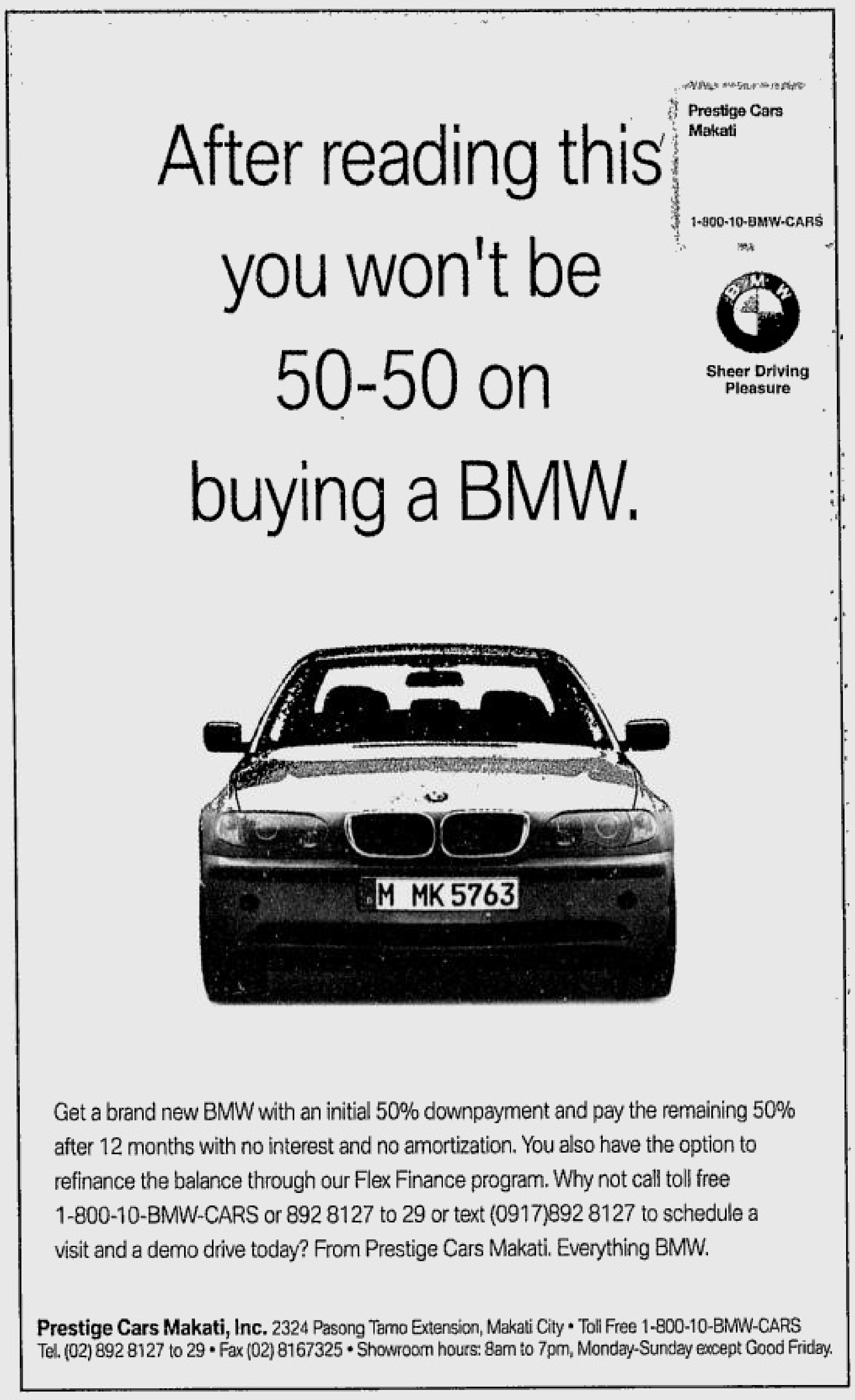
SARS has claimed some 143 lives worldwide and is believed to have infected at least 3,400. Hong Kong and China are the worst hit.

"Nevertheless, if the virus proves more virulent than initial estimates, economic dislocation and sustained budgetary deterioration could put pressure on sovereigns whose fiscal position is stretched for their rating level, especially those with negative outlooks, including Hong Kong," it said.

"In addition, the duration and eventual eradication, or just containment, of the outbreak will also affect economic prospects and budgetary outcomes," the agency said.

Ping Chew, director in S & P's sovereign ratings group, said "the adjustments in each economy are largely proportionate to the gravity of the outbreak, and to the importance of tourism and domestic consumption to the economy."

Under the agency's current base-case scenario that the virus is eventually controlled, the damage to real economy, public finance and public health, is likely to be short-lived and underlying credit fundamentals should remain unchanged. *AFP*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Motorcycle sales jumped 20% in Q1

THE MOTORCYCLE industry is enjoying resurgence in sales in the first quarter this year after major assemblers slashed their prices and unveiled financing deals to keep apace with cheap imported Chinese brands.

Former Motorcycle Development Program Participants Association (MDPPA) president Mateo B. Ocenar said industry sales jumped by 20 percent to 58,000 units from January to March this year from 48,340 units a year ago.

Ocenar said the assemblers slashed their entry-level models by as much as 15 percent to less than P40,000 each to keep up with fast-selling Chinese motorbikes that were retailing at P35,000 each. Chinese brands have cornered 17 percent of the market while smuggled units (most of which come from the Mainland) account for 15 percent of the market.

Ocenar said local assemblers had asked the Department of Trade and Industry to reject the registration of 19 Chinese assemblers in the local market to add to the 7 existing players in the market—Honda, Kawasaki, Yamaha, Suzuki, Kymco, Portacelli and Grand Star.

Aside from lower prices, Ocenar said buyers had reacted positively to a slew of financing deals that substantially cut the initial cash out for new motorcycles and provided longer-term payment plans.

Ocenar also noted the growing popularity of solo bikes this year which booked a 55 percent market share in the market or nearly triple its allocation 5 years ago. Ocenar said that sales of tricycles have been sliding since Tricycle Operators and Drivers Associations (TODA) nationwide have stopped accepting new members in their fold because of a saturated market.

The MDPPA is projecting an 18.4-percent growth in sales this year to 250,000 units from 211,000 last year. Ocenar said the Philippines' motorcycle market still had a long way to go to catch up with the market volume of its Asean neighbors—Indonesia (1.9 million units a year), Thailand (1.5 million units), and Malaysia (475,000 units). *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

Program seen to boost LRT-1 passenger capacity

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation and Communications aims to boost the capacity of the existing Light Rail Transit Line 1 to 67,000 passengers per direction per hour from the current level of only 27,000 passengers.

This, according to Transportation Assistant Secretary Robert Castanares, will be achieved through a $210-million capacity build-up project.

In a presentation, Castanares said the project would increase the LRT Line 1's average daily capacity to one million passengers.

Data from the Light Rail Transit Authority indicated that LRT Line 1 served around 106.9 million passengers last year, or an average of 293,000 passengers per day. It recorded some P1.5 billion in revenue in the same period.

Under the expansion project, 12 new air-conditioned four-car trains will be acquired and the existing trains will be upgraded.

The first phase of the project, involving design activities and preparation of tender documents for the selection of contractors, is underway and is up for the concurrence of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

The second package, the conceptual review of the rolling stocks and sub-stations, has already been submitted by Japanese firm Mitsubishi and is currently undergoing review.

Stocks drop 1.49% ...

From page B1

The Philippines was the only country given the year under the new watchlist policy adopted by the board of the California Public Employees' Retirement System, or Calpers, which has about $1.8 billion invested in emerging markets

The Philippine main index however fell 1.49 percent or 16.89 points to 1,116.48 in light trading.

Value turnover fell to P258.19 million from Monday's P401.8 million.

Losers beat gainers 39 to 20 and there were 27 stocks unchanged. *Reuters*

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DBP Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines is inviting interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

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Approved Budget: Php 5.656MM
Contract Duration up to July 25, 2003

Application for eligibility check is open to suppliers registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission/Department of Trade and Industry and has been in the Information Technology (IT) business for at least three (3) years, and must be at least 60% Filipino-owned (for partnership and corporations). Interested suppliers may secure the Eligibility Requirement Form from April 25 to 29, 2003 at the Procurement Services Division, 6th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City. Submission of the required eligibility documents shall not be later than May 9, 2003 addressed to:

THE CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)
Procurement Services Division/PSM
6/F, Development Bank of the Philippines
Sen. Gil J. Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City
Fax No. 8151614, E-mail address: procure-psm@devbankphil.com.ph

The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Executive Order No. 40 s. 2001 will be used in the conduct of this Bidding.

The Bank reserves the right to reject documents which do not comply with the requirements.

For further inquiries, please call Mr. Manuel A. Tagalo at telephone number 8129428.

Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – April 16 & 23, 2003)

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PDI-April 16, 2003

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Notice is given that Philippine Daily Inquirer Official Receipt Nos. 460476 to 460500 and Provisional Receipt Nos. 77779 to 77800 was lost.

Said receipts will not be honored effective April 1, 2003.

Philippine Daily Inquirer

(PDI--April 2, 9, & 16, 2003)

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DBP Development Bank of the Philippines

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Development Bank of the Philippines is inviting interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

Supply, Installation, Testing, Training and Documentation of Tape Library Including bundled Backup/restore software

Approved Budget: Php 4.5MM
Contract Duration up to July 25, 2003

Application for eligibility check is open to suppliers registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission/Department of Trade and Industry and has been in the Information Technology (IT) business for at least three (3) years, and must be at least 60% Filipino-owned (for partnership and corporations). Interested suppliers may secure the Eligibility Requirement Form from April 25 to 29, 2003 at the Procurement Services Division, 6th Floor, DBP Building, Makati City. Submission of the required eligibility documents shall not be later than May 9, 2003 addressed to:

THE CHAIRMAN
Bids and Awards Committee (BAC)
Procurement Services Division/PSM
6/F, Development Bank of the Philippines
Sen. Gil J. Puyat Ave. cor. Makati Ave., Makati City
Fax No. 8151614, E-mail address: procure-psm@devbankphil.com.ph

The Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Executive Order No. 40 s. 2001 will be used in the conduct of this Bidding.

The Bank reserves the right to reject documents which do not comply with the requirements.

For further inquiries, please call Mr. Manuel A. Tagalo at telephone number 8129428.

Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – April 16 & 23, 2003)

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION
OF
ANAM INSTRUMENTS (PHILIPPINES), INC.

Notice is hereby given that **ANAM INSTRUMENTS (PHILIPPINES), INC.** will file with the Securities and Exchange Commission a Certificate of Amendment of Articles of Incorporation shortening its corporate life to March 31, 2003.

Any person who may have a claim against said corporation may present the same to the undersigned at c/o ALPAP 1 Bldg., 5th Floor, 140 L.P. Leviste Street, Salcedo Village, 1227 Makati City.

This announcement serves as notice to all parties concerned of the dissolution of said Company.

(Sgd.) **RENATO G. CALMA**
Corporate Secretary
ANAM INSTRUMENTS (PHILIPPINES), INC.

(PDI–April 16, 23 & 30, 2003)

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ON VIEW: MONDAY 21ST APRIL 2003 FROM 9 00AM TO 5 00PM & MORNING OF SALE DAYS
AT: FCT AREA, INTEL TECH PHILIPPINES INC GATEWAY BUSINESS PARK, BRGY. JAVALERA, GENERAL TRIAS 4107 CAVITE, PHILIPPINES
REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT: (PHP20,000) UPON REGISTRATION

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Office of the President

BCDA

Bases Conversion Development Authority

INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS

ASSET DISPOSITION PROGRAM – PHASE 2

The Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) is inviting interested proponents to participate in Phase 2 of BCDA's Asset Disposition Program (ADP Phase 2). ADP Phase 2 involves the development and privatization of the following BCDA properties:

- Twenty-five (25) hectares located at Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, bounded on the north by American Battle Monument and east by C-5; and
- Five (5) hectares located at the former Camp Bago Bantay, Brgy. Sto. Cristo, Bago-Bantay, Quezon City between SM City Annex and Mindanao Avenue.

Interested proponents may submit their Letters of Interest to BCDA and can purchase the Terms of Reference (TOR) for ADP Phase 2 that outlines, among others, the requirements for proponents interested to participate in the privatization.

The TORs for the above properties will be ready for distribution to interested proponents by 23 April 2003 at the BCDA offices at a non-refundable cost of Php10,000.00 for each TOR, payable to BCDA in Cash or Manager's Check.

A pre-qualification conference among interested proponents is set for 2:00 p.m., 07 May 2003. The objective of the pre-qualification conference is to discuss the property, the TOR and other issues that may be raised by interested proponents.

Interested proponents can direct their inquiries to Ms. Aileen An. R. Soza or Ms. Bambie L. Andal at telephone numbers 510-0420 to 510-0411 or at arzosa@bcda.gov.ph or blandal@bcda.gov.ph

(Sgd.) RUFO COLAYCO
President and Chief Executive Officer

(PDI – April 16, 23 & 30, 2003)

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE & INDUSTRY PHILIPPINES

NOTICE OF INITIATION OF INVESTIGATION ON THE APPLICATION FOR THE IMPOSITION OF SAFEGUARD MEASURES AGAINST IMPORTATION OF GLASS MIRRORS (SGM CASE NO. 01-2003)

ON 08 APRIL 2003, DTI OFFICIALLY RECEIVED A PROPERLY DOCUMENTED APPLICATION FROM ASAHI GLASS PHILIPPINES FOR THE INITIATION OF A SAFEGUARD MEASURES INVESTIGATION AGAINST THE IMPORTATION OF GLASS MIRRORS. THE PROTEST ALLEGED THAT THE INCREASED IMPORTS HAVE CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE SERIOUS INJURY SUFFERED BY THE LOCAL INDUSTRY.

THE DTI ACTING UNDER SECTION 6 OF RA 8800, THE SAFEGUARD MEASURES ACT, HAS MADE AN EVALUATION OF THE PROTEST AND FOUND REASONABLE GROUNDS TO INITIATE A SAFEGUARD MEASURES INVESTIGATION ON GLASS MIRRORS FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES. THE PERIOD OF INVESTIGATION IS FOR THE LAST FIVE (5) YEARS i.e. 1997 TO 2002 WITH THE PERIOD OF OBSERVED SURGE IN IMPORTS FROM 2001 TO END OF AUGUST 2002.

THE COMMENCEMENT DATE FOR THE INVESTIGATION IS THE DAY ON WHICH THIS NOTICE OF INITIATION IS PUBLISHED IN TWO (2) NEWSPAPERS OF GENERAL CIRCULATION.

WHEREFORE, IN VIEW THEREOF, ANY INTERESTED PARTIES WHO MAY WISH TO SUBMIT THEIR COMMENTS AND POSITION ON THE PROTEST FILED BY ASAHI GLASS PHILIPPINES AGAINST THE IMPORTATION OF GLASS MIRRORS ARE REQUESTED TO DIRECT THEIR REPRESENTATION TO THE BUREAU OF IMPORT SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY, 3RD FLOOR, OPPEN BUILDING, #349 SEN. GIL PUYAT AVENUE, MAKATI CITY, WITHIN FIVE (5) DAYS FROM DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

14 April 2003

MaRoxas
MAR ROXAS
Secretary

(PDI--April 16, 2003)

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE & INDUSTRY PHILIPPINES

NOTICE OF INITIATION OF INVESTIGATION ON THE APPLICATION FOR THE IMPOSITION OF SAFEGUARD MEASURES AGAINST IMPORTATION OF FIGURED GLASS (SGM CASE NO. 02-2003)

ON 08 APRIL 2003, DTI OFFICIALLY RECEIVED A PROPERLY DOCUMENTED APPLICATION FROM ASAHI GLASS PHILIPPINES FOR THE INITIATION OF A SAFEGUARD MEASURES INVESTIGATION AGAINST THE IMPORTATION OF FIGURED GLASS. THE PROTEST ALLEGED THAT THE INCREASED IMPORTS HAVE CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE SERIOUS INJURY SUFFERED BY THE LOCAL INDUSTRY.

THE DTI ACTING UNDER SECTION 6 OF RA 8800, THE SAFEGUARD MEASURES ACT, HAS MADE AN EVALUATION OF THE PROTEST AND FOUND REASONABLE GROUNDS TO INITIATE A SAFEGUARD MEASURES INVESTIGATION ON FIGURED GLASS FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES. THE PERIOD OF INVESTIGATION IS FOR THE LAST FIVE (5) YEARS i.e. 1997 TO 2002 WITH THE PERIOD OF OBSERVED SURGE IN IMPORTS FROM 1999 - 2002.

THE COMMENCEMENT DATE FOR THE INVESTIGATION IS THE DAY ON WHICH THIS NOTICE OF INITIATION IS PUBLISHED IN TWO (2) NEWSPAPERS OF GENERAL CIRCULATION.

WHEREFORE, IN VIEW THEREOF, ANY INTERESTED PARTIES WHO MAY WISH TO SUBMIT THEIR COMMENTS AND POSITION ON THE PROTEST FILED BY ASAHI GLASS PHILIPPINES AGAINST THE IMPORTATION OF FIGURED GLASS ARE REQUESTED TO DIRECT THEIR REPRESENTATION TO THE BUREAU OF IMPORT SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY, 3RD FLOOR, OPPEN BUILDING, #349 SEN. GIL PUYAT AVENUE, MAKATI CITY, WITHIN FIVE (5) DAYS FROM DATE OF PUBLICATION OF THIS NOTICE.

14 April 2003

MaRoxas
(Sgd.) **MAR ROXAS**
Secretary

(PDI--April 16, 2003)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT
BUREAU OF FIRE PROTECTION
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC)

April 14, 2003

INVITATION TO BID

The Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) of the Department of the Interior and Local Government is inviting duly registered and BFP accredited health care providers to participate in the bidding to be conducted by Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) for the Health Care/Maintenance Insurance Services of all BFP officials and personnel.

Interested bidders who wish to apply for eligibility and to bid must submit Letter of Intent together with BFP Accreditation Certificate and other relevant documents on or before the deadline on April 28, 2003 addressed to:

The CHAIRMAN, BFP BAC
Bureau of Fire Protection
Rm. 403, #145 Union Square Condominium
15th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City

Bid documents may be obtained at the Bureau of Fire Protection Bids and Awards Committee, Room 403, Union Square Condominium I, 15th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City on April 30, May 2 & 5, 2003 during office hours from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM with Telephone No. 911-9055 (Attn: FO1 Blesila C Manaois, Secretariat), upon payment of a non-refundable fee of P3,000.00 in cash at Finance Service Unit, Room 610. The Pre-bid Conference will be held on May 18, 2003 at Rm. 101, BFP Conference Room.

The Bid Security shall be in amount equivalent to a percentage of the BFP approved budget for contract to be bid in accordance with the following schedule:

Form of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid
1. Cash, Certified Check, Cashier's Check, Manager's Check, Bank Draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit	One percent (1%)
2. Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1 ½%)
3. Surety Bond	Two and a half percent (2 ½%)

The BFP BAC reserves the right to reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive any required formality and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal as evaluated by BAC is the most advantageous to the government. The BAC assumes no obligation to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expenses or loss that may be incurred in the preparation of bids, nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) **JOSE E. COLLADO**
SR SUPT (DSC) BFP
Deputy Fire Chief for Operation
and Chairman, BFP-BAC

(PDI – April 16 & 23, 2003)

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
NATIONAL HOUSING AUTHORITY

NOTICE OF DISPOSITION

The *National Housing Authority* is inviting *Offers to Purchase* by way of sealed bids the following commercial & industrial properties on *"As-Is-Where-Is"* basis:

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION	BASE PRICE/ SQ.METER
I. SECOND TENDER			
001-011	11 commercial lots, 201.5 to 322 sqm. With TCTs	Vista del Rio Subd. Brgy. Alimanao Penablanca, Cagayan	1,300.00 to 1,500.00
012-014	3 commercial lots, 304 & 506 sqm. With TCTs	Cancabato Ville Subd. Brgy. San Jose Tacloban City	1,300.00 to 1,400.00
II. FIRST TENDER			
015-021	7 industrial lots 9,658 to 10,811 sqm. With TCTs	San Jose Del Monte Bulacan	800.00

Payment schemes for the abovecited properties are ***cash***, ***modified cash*** (6 equal installments without interest) and ***installment*** for a maximum period of ten ***(10) years*** with graduated interest rates.

Bidding Materials can be secured for a non-refundable fee of PhP200.00 from the ***Commercial/Industrial Bids & Awards Committee (COINBAC) c/o the Commercial & Industrial Estates Department (CIED)***, Mezzanine Floor, NHA Main Building, Elliptical Road, Quezon City and Project Offices mentioned below. For inquiry, please call ***Ms. Evelyn V. Ramos, Manager, Sales Div., CIED*** or ***Ms. Neri A. Subido*** at the following ***Tel. Nos. (02) 923-0390, (02) 928-4561 local 302 & 303.***

SCHEDULE:

	Cagayan	Sapang Palay	Tacloban
A. Submission of Pre-Qualification Requirements	April 21 to May 5, '03 until 5:00 p.m. NHA Reg. Off. II, Sunshine Valley Homes, Pengue-Ruyu, Tuguegarao	April 28 to May 9, '03 until 5:00 p.m. CIED, Mezzanine Floor, NHA Main Bldg. Elliptical Road, Q.C.	May 5 to May 21, '03 until 5:00 p.m. NHA-Leyte Proj. Off. Calnapawan Rd. Sagkahan Dist. Tacloban City
B. Pre-Bid Conference	May 7, '03 NHA Reg. Off. II 2:30 p.m.	May 13, '03 Operations Center 3rd Flr. NHA Bldg., Q.C., 10:00 a.m.	May 21, '03 NHA Leyte Proj. Off. 2:30 p.m.
C. Submission of Sealed Bids	May 9, '03 8 to 10 a.m. NHA Reg. Off. II	May 15, '03 8 to 12 noon Operations Center	May 23, '03 8 to 10 a.m. NHA Leyte Proj Off.
D. Opening of Sealed Bids	May 9, '03 10:30 a.m. NHA Reg. Off. II	May 15, '03 1:30 p.m. Operations Center	May 23, '03 10:30 a.m. NHA Leyte Proj. Off.

The Authority reserves the right to ***reject*** any or all offers or any part thereof or to ***waive*** any required formalities and ***accept*** offers most advantageous to the interest of NHA.

(Sgd.) **JOSEPH PETER S. SISON**
Assistant General Manager/
Chairman, COINBAC

(PDI - Apr. 12 & 16, 2003)

Center for Health Development II
SOUTHERN ISABELA GENERAL HOSPITAL
Santiago City (Isabela), Philippines
Tel. No. (078) 682-8123 Fax No. (078) 682-2029

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY & TO BID

The **SOUTHERN ISABELA GENERAL HOSPITAL**, Santiago City hereby invites interested suppliers to provide medical equipment, drugs and medicines, laboratory, x-ray, medical, office and janitorial supplies to this office.

Ony duly accredited manufacturers/suppliers as certified by the DOH may participate in the bidding. Bid documents can be secured from the SIGH HOBAC Secretariat, Administrative Services Section upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 500.00.

ACTIVITY	DATE/VENUE
Issuance of Bid Documents	April 21 - April 28, 2003
Submission of Eligibility Requirements	April 22 - May 6, 2003
Pre-Bid Conference	April 28, 2003 / Conference Room 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.
Submission and Opening of Sealed Bids	
1. Drugs and Medicines, Medical, Surgical, Dental, X-Ray and Laboratory supplies	May 13, 2003 / Conference Room 9:00 a.m.
2. Office Supplies	May 14, 2003 / Conference Room 1:30 p.m.
Post-Qualification & Bid Evaluation	May 15-30, 2003 / Conference Room

The SIGH reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the proposal received, or to accept such bids as maybe responsive and advantageous to the government.

For details, contact MARIA F. ACOSTA-HOBAC Member, SIGH.

(Sgd.) **JOSE ILDEFONSO B. COSTALES, JR., MD, MHA, FICS**
Chief of Hospital I

(PDI - Apr 16 & 20, 2003)

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MAJ. JOSEPH RODOLFO D. LATONERO, JR. PAF

PMA CLASS '85
of Sorsogon City and Baguio City

was recalled home from his assignment in Aceh, Indonesia to be with his Creator on April 11, 2003 at the age of 40.

He is survived by his bereaved wife, **Kaydee**; children, **BJ** and **Celine**; loving parents, **Rodolfo, Sr. (†)** and **Nena**; brothers and sisters **Bubut, Babie, Joy, Yolly, Pinky, Cristy, Ferdie** and **Paul**; parents-in-law, **Ricardo & Dory Magno**; brothers-in-law; sisters-in-law; nieces & nephews; other relatives & friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Villamor Air Base Mortuary, Pasay City.

Interment will take place at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City.

ENGR. PEDRO O. OCASION, SR.

Died peacefully on April 13, 2003 at the age of 78.

His loving wife **Quirina**; brother and sister; children **Presca, Bong** and **Myrna**; and grandchildren **Ton-Ton, Patricia** and **Junie, Oliver, Din-Din, Ryan, Paolo, Philippe** and **Peter**; nephews and nieces and other relatives request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at St. Peter Memorial Chapel at Quezon Avenue, Quezon City, Metro Manila.

Interment will be on Thursday, April 17, 2003 at 2:00 p.m. at the Holy Cross Memorial Park, San Bartolome, Novaliches, Quezon City after the 1:00 p.m. Mass.

"Eternal life will swallow up that which can die. God made us for this very reason and He has given us the Spirit as a guarantee that we will live again."

2 Corinthians 5:4-5

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INTERMENT NOTICE

Name	Date of Interment	Time	Place of Interment	Place of Wake
SOFIA M. MENDOZA	APRIL 16	1:00 PM	Holy Gardens Greenhills Mem. Park Calamba City	B16 L25 Gotesco St. Calamba Hills Subd. Mayapa, Calamba City
LEOPOLDO B. SALAVANTE	APRIL 20	1:00 PM	Holy Gardens Memorial Park Angono, Rizal	471 Violet St., Rainbow Vil., Angono, Rizal

www.holygardens.com
E-mail address: sales@holygardens.com

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Tels. 747-8599; 747-8609 • Telefax 641-1760
AUREA QUIOGUE FUNERAL HOMES
243 A.B. Fernandez Ave., Dagupan City, Pangasinan
Tels. (0785) 522-3451; 522-2128; (0917) 434-9976
CEBU ROLLING HILLS MEMORIAL CHAPELS INC.
Cebu Branch: A.S. Fortuna Street, Banilad, Mandaue City, Cebu;
Tels 346-2543; 346-2601
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Nivel Hills, Lahug, Cebu City; Tels. 231-0721; 231-3192
COSMOPOLITAN FUNERAL HOMES, INC.
Camus Ext. cor. J. Abad Santos, Davao City;
Tels. (082) 227-1201; 227-1258
DAYAO FUNERAL HOME
#2 Bayani St., Galas, Quezon City
Tels. 740-2683; 781-3705; 781-3688; 413-9400; 715-5594
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Tels. 641-7909; 641-1735
M. Almeda St., Pateros, Metro Manila; Tels. 642-3010; 633-3602
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187 Real St., Zapote Alabang, Las Piñas; Tels. 873-0507; 873-0024
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865 J.P. Rizal St., Poblacion, Makati City; Tels. 890-3556; 899-8191
FUNERARIA TUASON
Poblacion, San Miguel, Bulacan 3011;
Tels. (044) 764-0261; 678-0266; (0917) 895-0603
FUNERARIA SAMSON
145 Bayan Luma, Imus, Cavite; Tels. (046) 471-3375; 471-2675
GARDEN OF MEMORIES MEMORIAL PARK
Calsadang Bago, Pateros, Metro Manila; Tels. 642-6181 to 82
HERITAGE PARK
Bayani Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila
Tels. (DL) 845-2341 to 42; (TL) 845-2334 to 38 loc. 110/112
HOLY GARDENS MEMORIAL PARK
Third Level, Unishoppe Complex
Quezon Ave., Angono, Rizal
Tels. 651-1711; 651-0737
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Manila #23 Palo St., Project 2, Quezon City; Tel. 434-3258
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Tels. 522-8846; 522-9438; 400-5394

CLASSIFIEDS

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. Contract : Sp02.DBTL.Le-0359 — Construction and Erection of Dasmariñas - Biñan 230 kV Steel Tower Double Circuit Transmission Line Project
2. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall consist of furnishing all construction plant, labor, materials, supplies, tools and equipment (except for materials and equipment specified to be furnished by TRANSCO), constructing complete the 230 kV Steel Tower Transmission Line Project.
3. The Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid are as follows from Internal Cash Generation.

   Schedule I (Dasmariñas S/S to Tower No. DB-22) - P 48,732,381.00
   Schedule II (Tower No. DB-22 to Biñan S/S) - P 54,093,330.00
4. Application for Eligibility is open to Filipino contractors who have the legal, technical and financial requisites of the contract to be bid/project with the following License and Registration Particulars as specified in the Eligibility Documents.

   For Schedule I:
   License Particular : at least Category AA - Specialty in Electrical Works
   Registration Particular : at least Large A - Electrical Works

   For Schedule II:
   License Particular : Category AAA - Specialty in Electrical Works
   Registration Particular : Large B - Electrical Works
5. Application for Eligibility shall be evaluated using "PASS/FAIL" criteria and only Eligible Bidders shall be invited by Transco in the bidding. All bids equal to or lower than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be evaluated based on the responsiveness of the contractor's offer to the contract under bidding subject to Postqualification before an award is made. Bid Prices submitted higher than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be rejected and returned outright.
6. Eligibility Documents and Forms will be available for issuance on **April 15, 2003** at the Bids and Contracts Management Department, Second Floor, Building No. 2, Power Center, Agham Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1104, Telefax No.: 921-2308 upon presentation of Letter of Intent, Contractor's License and a payment of non-refundable fee of P1,000.00 per copy.
7. Deadline for submission of duly accomplished Application for Eligibility, Forms, documents and statements shall be on or before **May 14, 2003** and shall be submitted at the registration office and address mentioned above. If the date is a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission and/or incomplete application shall not be accepted.
8. Contractor, not yet included in the Transco's List of Registered Contractors, who wishes to participate in the public bidding, in order to facilitate eligibility check/screening, are requested to register with the registration office mentioned above by submitting the following basic requirements which should be maintained current and updated at least once a year. A Certificate of Registration will be issued to contractors upon approval.
   - Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) business name registration or Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) registration certificate, as appropriate;
   - Mayor's permit and/or municipal license for the current year;
   - Taxpayer's Identification Number;
   - Notarized statement of the prospective bidder that it is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation, including, in the case of procurement of civil works, non-inclusion in the "blacklist" of contractors issued by the CIAP.
   - Audited financial statements, stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions, for the immediately preceding calendar year, showing, among others, the prospective bidder's total and current assets and liabilities inclusive of Income Tax Return and Receipt;
   - Contractor's License.
9. TRANSCO reserves the right to reject any Application for Eligibility or all Bids or request for registration without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
10. In view of the emergency nature of the Project, the Contractor may submit Application for Eligibility for two (2) schedules, however, the Contractor shall be allowed to participate only in either Schedule I or II, if evaluated eligible for two (2) schedules.
11. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **WINIFREDO SM. PANGILINAN**
Chairman Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI - Apr 12, 14 & 16 2003)

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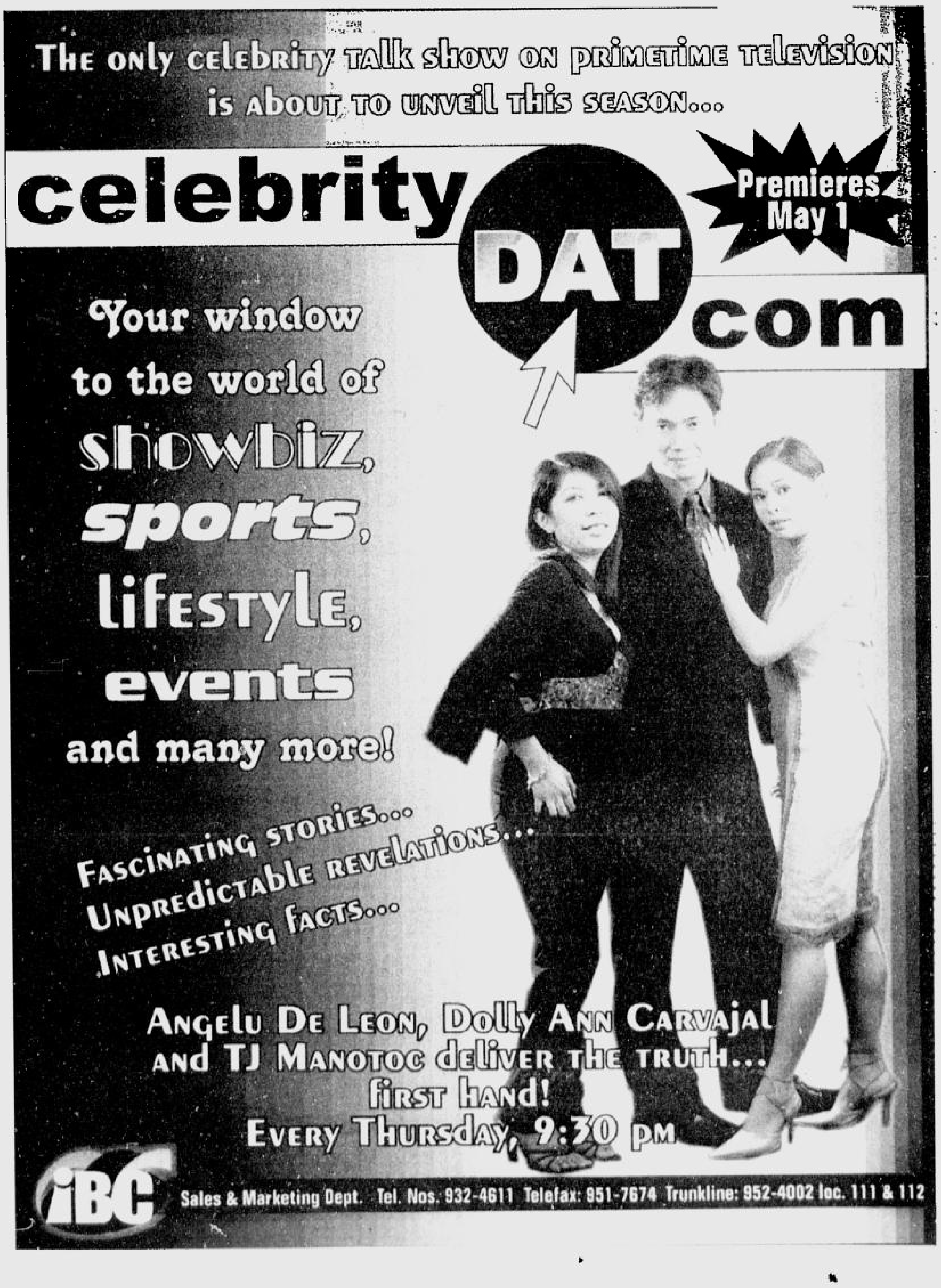
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People, Events & Products

E-mail: pr_pep@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Aries Espinosa
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AsiaFood Expo expanding to boost local entrepreneurs

ASIAFOOD Expo is extending services to the food industry by providing an additional location right next to the main exhibition hall. The organizer tagged it as the "Annex". The expansion is meant to accommodate a considerable number of exhibitors, specifically small and medium entrepreneurs.

The organizer, Trade Information Marketing and Exhibitions Inc. has provided the Annex as a simple way to support the local food industry. It will house the Food and Drinks Asia 2003 and Food Franchising 2003. The objective of Afex is to be a complete, one-stop-shop venue to provide everything under one roof. Visitors attending will certainly get what they need from food processing, machineries and equipment, packaging supplies, food and bakery ingredients, food and beverage supplies, and food franchising.

AsiaFood Expo 2003, the 12th International Exposition on Food Processing, Packaging and Handling Machinery, Equipment and Technology has boosted its reputation as the only comprehensive exhibition consistently bringing together a huge number of exhibitors showcasing top-of-the-line and high-technology products and the most number of top-quality business visitors under one roof. It will be held from Sept. 3 to 6 at the World Trade Center Metro Manila.

Last year, AsiaFood had attracted 22,866 registered local and international trade buyer visitors. These attendees came to meet and discuss business with 555 exhibitor companies from 34 countries.

For booth inquiries, call the organizer at 834-0085 to 86, fax 831-3828 or e-mail time@skyinet.net.

AsiaFood Expo will be held with equally three important events-Food and Drinks Asia 2003, the 7th International Exposition on Specialty Foods, Delicatessen, Confectionery, Beverages, Beers, Wines & Spirits, Food Franchising 2003, the 7th International Food Franchising and Business Systems Expositions and Food-Serv Asia 2003, the 3rd International Exposition on Foodservice, Catering Systems, Supplies, Equipment and Technology.

LAUNCHING OF THE
EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM
WITH THE
CHINESE PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATION
FOR FRIENDSHIP

ASSUMPTION EXCHANGE PROGRAM LAUNCHED

The Assumption College Basic Education Division, together with its Family Council, recently launched an academic exchange program with the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries. Seated, from left, are former Vice President Salvador Laurel who facilitated the agreement in Beijing last year, Assumption BED principal Sr. Maria Josefina Matias, RA, PROC, Ambassador Wang Chungui and Celia Laurel of Assumption HS Class 1947. Standing, from left, are the members of the first delegation to China headed by family council officers Patty Gallardo and Belen Chua, council president Baby Herrera, director-for academic affairs Rita Atienza, faculty coordinators Anne Godoy and Anna Malit.

MAPP MEETING

The Mutual Assistance for Philippine Professionals (MAPP) Foundation Inc. held its annual meeting recently at Gloria Maris, Shangrila Plaza. Shown are the MAPP officers at the presidential table composed of (from left) Hajime Mori, president, Princess Cordova, interpreter, Bayani Diwa, corporate secretary, Rosario N. Lopez, chair, Tomas Osias and Alex T. Escano, vice chair. Not shown are Eduardo Carlos, Jose Nilo Penado, lawyer Joseph Mabilog, legal counsel, Bonifacio Choa, professor Tomoe Fukamachi, Akira Muramoto, Kazuhiro Yoshizawa, Tadashi Nakatsubo, Dr. Kazuhito Naito, Hatsuyo Mori, Rebecca Dalumpinez, corporate secretary, and Masashi Hosogai, consultant to the president.

Abap invites exhibitors to book fair

THE PRESTIGIOUS Association of Booksellers for the Academe and the Professions (Abap) is inviting exhibitors to its 7th Academic Bookfair to be held from July 14 to 18, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. at the UP Bahay ng Alumni, Diliman, Quezon City. The five-day book fair has adopted the theme "Of Books and Bytes: Connecting People, Information and Technology."

According to Abap president Virginia P. Gapuz, "As in the past years, this book fair promises to bring together more librarians, teachers, researchers, students, professionals and the public to acquire their much-needed reference books, textbooks and other educational materials."

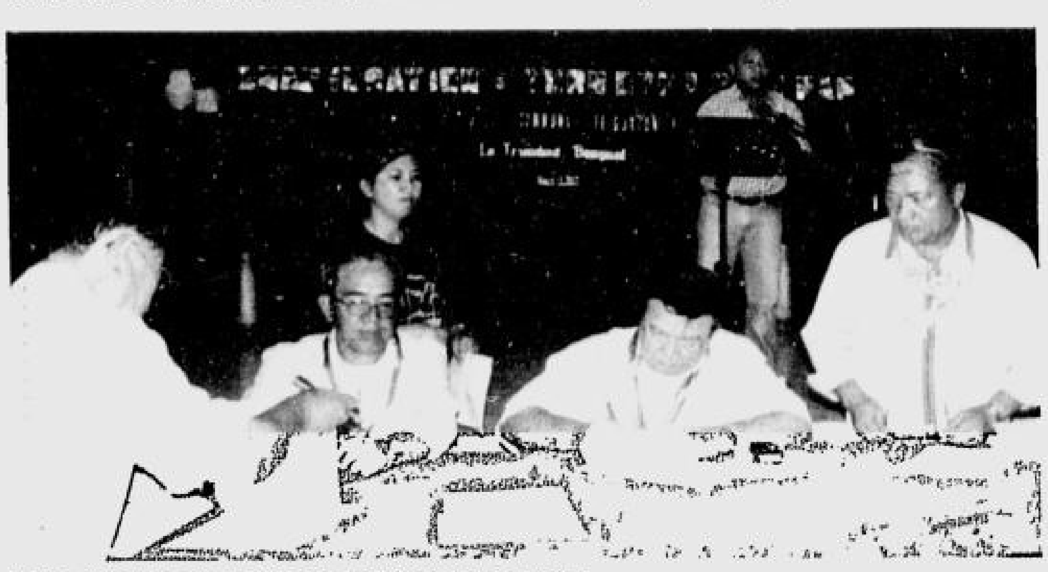
As an added attraction, the librarians' seminar will be held in cooperation with the PLRC. Says Gapuz, "This seminar always attracts no less than 100 librarians from all over the country, assuring us of our preferred market. We have also lined up seminars for teachers."

This year, Abap is offering up to 56 booths, with the priority choice given to members who selected their booths before March 15. Unsold booths will be offered to non-members. Computer companies and software dealers are welcome to join.

For inquiries, call Lydia Wenceslao at 925-4572.

MENDOZA CLAN REUNION

The huge clan of the late Juan and Maria de Leon Mendoza of Sta. Maria, Bulacan, held a grand reunion at the Father Blanco's Garden in Intramuros after a mass at San Agustin Church officiated by Bishop Federico O. Escaler to honor two living daughters of the couple--Angelica L. Mendoza and Luz Mendoza-Santos. Featured were games and a video presentation showing members of the clan in different functions and vintages. Don Juan Mendoza was a commandant of the Filipino forces during the Filipino revolution against the Spanish authorities. A justice of the Peace, he was four times the 'Presidente' of Sta. Maria. Dona Maria de Leon Mendoza's father was a Capitan and her mother was of Spanish ancestry. Shown are the honorees Angelica and Luz (seated). Standing, from left, are Lydia Palaypay, Priscilla Reyes, Josephine C. Reyes, Charito Panganiban-Melchor, Virginia Borbon-Mendoza, Lourdes Reyes-Montinola, and Pacita Panganiban de Myer.



DA TURNS OVER IRRIGATION PROJECT

Celestino Martinez Jr., Undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture (seated center) leads the signing of the turnover of the Pico Communal Irrigation Project of Pico, La Trinidad, Benguet. Also shown are (from right) Mayor Nestor Fongwan, Governor Raul Molintas and Alfredo Acop, Irrigation Association president (back to camera). Assisting them are NIA personnel Ma. Theresa Manuel and engineer Benito Espique Jr., Benguet Provincial Irrigation officer.

Sony's Boracay trips summer promo

THIS SUMMER, Sony Philippines, the country's market leader in consumer electronics, offers you the chance to win a perfect escape from life in the big city-a free holiday for two in Boracay. For every purchase of any Sony Handycam or Cybershot product, a customer is instantly entitled to a raffle entry and gets a chance to win one of 60 vacation packages to be given away, each consisting of a 3-day, 2-night stay.

The Sony Cyber-shot U, the brand's smallest and ultra-light digital camera, can perform multi-tasks including instant shooting and capturing action as it happens. Fashionably designed in hip colors, this small wonder enables you to download and e-mail still and moving pictures as well as enhance captured images with its filter features.

Sony also introduces its newest breakthroughs in digital video camera technology-the DCR-IP210, DCR-IP5 and DCRIP45. Equipped with the revolutionary MicroMV format which makes possible the world's smallest and most compact video cameras, this line of camcorders allows for high-quality image recording and features MPEG2 data compression technology.

Spice up your season with the Sony Summer Shots promo-get the chance to win a free vacation for two to Boracay when you purchase any Sony Handycam and Cyubershot items. Seven lucky winners will be chosen each week for the duration of the promo, which is ongoing until April 24.

Bits Clips

Manila Midtown's Easter

THE STAGE is set for a meaningful yet fun-filled Easter as the Manila Midtown Hotel (MMH) presents a theatrical show featuring Bible-related stories on April 20, 10 a.m. to 12 noon at the Intramuros Ballroom. An exciting and prize-filled Easter Egg Hunt follows. Tickets priced at P375 net per child (12 years and below) and P425 net per adult include lunch buffet. Also, avail yourself of MMH's Easter room promo from April 13 to 20. For only P2,200 net, unwind in the cool comfort of the standard rooms complete with first class service plus breakfast buffet. Call 526-7001, for Easter tickets local 6881, for room reservations local 6440. The Easter event is supported by iClub (SkyCable and Home Cable's Kiddie Club) and Universal Robina Corp.

Philam turns 14

PRE-NEED company Philam Plans Inc. celebrates its 14th anniversary on April 19. To commemorate the event, the company is holding an anniversary program on April 25 at the Philamlife Auditorium in UN Avenue, Ermita. As its simple contribution, the leading pre-need company will hold a bloodletting project in coordination with the Philippine National Red Cross. This would be the company's 8th year of holding the bloodletting program. Philam Plans will also accept donations on the same date for the Aid for Basilan Children Fund Drive. A loyalty program on April 25 will honor service awardees as well as the Ten Outstanding Employees of Philam Plans. A 3-day exhibit starting April 23 at the Northeast Lobby of the Philamlife Building also highlights the celebrations.

Adams' Holy Week tours

RELIGIOUS pageantry characterizes the staging of the famed Pagtaltal of Guimaras Island. The passion play is patterned after the Oberammergau in Germany, an event held every 10 years. From the plaza up to a hilltop where the crucifixion is held, tourists personally feel the passion and sufferings of the Christ Jesus. This is part of the West Visayas Heritage Tour that includes the tourist attractions of Iloilo and Negros departing April 17. Other Holy Week tours arranged for the public are Hidden Valley, Lake Caliraya and Pagsanjan, Bohol and Cebu and Bicol, Mayon Volcano. Adams Express Travel (521-1638, 521-1651) can also reserve accommodations in Baguio and Boracay, and some 50 other resorts.

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POSITIVISM ART WORKSHOPS

The Positivism Art Workshop is now accepting students who wish to learn the basics of drawing and painting with focus on positive subjects such as 'hard work, family unity, respect for elders, love of God and care for the environment. The workshops are conducted by positivism exponent and painter ER Tagle (shown standing) once a week for eight weeks with four venues and with morning and afternoon classes to choose from: two in Makati City, St. John Bosco Parish and Makati Sports Club, one in Quezon City at Christ the King and at Patio Manila café-restaurant at the ground floor of R. Magsaysay Center, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. For inquiries, call 816-0904 or 0917-9726223.

MIRANT TECHNICAL STAFF TRAINING

Maintenance engineers and technicians of Mirant Philippines are undergoing training on PLC (Programmable Logic Controllers) at the Meralco Foundation Institute (MFI) where the first batch was welcomed by MFI president Col. Alex T. Escano (standing right). Mirant is a major power producer for Napocor, operating a high-capacity power plant located in Pagbilao, Quezon. Shown are Bernard Quitay (standing, foreground), head of the instrumentation department, who anchored the simple opening ceremony.

PAA FIRST QUARTER ASSEMBLY

The Philippine Automotive Association confers a certificate of appreciation to Mr Paul N. Ching who led the organization to greater heights during his presidency from 1999 to 2002. Photo shows (from left) Mr Paul N. Ching, PAA director; Mr Leo J. Ferreria, PAA vice-president and Mr George F. Blaylock, PAA president. The award was given during the PAA First Quarter Assembly last March 20 at the Manila Golf Country Club.

Product Files

Nestle Ice Cream from Touch Mobile

Nestle
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TOUCH

TOUCH Mobile, one of the country's fastest growing GSM h [illegible] helps keep you cool this summer with the latest promotional tie-up with Nestle Ice Cream. Under the promo, which runs from March 15 to April 30, a purchase of Touch Mobile's Super Value SIM pack, priced at only P170, entitles the buyer to a free 900-ml Nestle Ice Cream Bac2Back Classic Ube-Mango flavor. Buyers need only to activate their Touch Mobile SIM by dialing 802 and wait for a text message within 24 hours. To claim this freebie, they can present the text message, together with the plastic housing of their Touch Mobile SIM card, to any Mercury Drug self-serve outlet nationwide. Redemption period ends June 30.

email: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

PEOPLE at WORK

Editor **Raul O. Marcelo** ◎ *Subsection Editor* **Regina Galang Reyes**

Taking the path least traveled led CEO to success

By Regina Galang Reyes

CAREER TALES

REFRESHINGLY humble. This is what strikes one when meeting Gary Teves for the first time. It is thus no wonder that this man, who belongs to a well-known political and economic clan and has impressive academic and work credentials, chose to cast his lot with the rural folk early on in his career.

Teves could have taken the path towards fame and riches abroad if he wanted to. He could have continued his well-paying corporate work, and gone the road of riches and power in a big company. Instead, after being educated abroad, he went back to the country. After experiencing what Teves considers as a successful learning experience in a big and reputable company, he went into public service and focused on how he could help in the industrial and agricultural development of the country. Teves muses, "It was a confluence of events that contributed to my involvement in the countryside." His life has always been about taking the least attractive option but still ending up successful.

Taking the path less traveled, Teves, 59, now runs Land Bank of the Philippines as president and CEO.

High expectations

Born in Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte, his mother, Narcisa "Sisay" Bustalino, died when he was six years old. His father, Herminio "Miniong" Teves, allowed his uncle, Senator Lorenzo Teves, to raise him in the traditional mold of the clan.

There were high expectations for the young Gary to tread the footsteps of success. An Atenean in his elementary and high school years, he was sent by his family to study abroad. Starting at the Universidad de Madrid in Spain, he ended up graduating from the City of London College in London, England with a diploma in Business studies. During his study breaks, he traveled across Europe, surprisingly without asking for additional allowance from his family, by doing odd jobs as a dishwasher, magazine salesperson, ditch worker and a member of an archaeological team, a move that indicated early his affinity with the working class.

Two years after his graduation and while working for the former Presidential Economic Staff, he went to the US to earn his masters degree in development economics from Williams College in Massachusetts, USA. Then, he went back to the country.

Political track

Back in the Philippines, he initially pursued a corporate career, first with a bank and later on, with an Ayala company, among others. Then, in another twist of choice, he opted to run as congressional representative of the third district of Negros Oriental in 1987 where he served for three terms. Teves recalls, "I was reluctant to go into politics but my father finally convinced me to do so. My uncle was senator at that time and the family was deep into politics with four generations of politicians in the family."

While in Congress, he immersed himself in various congressional committees and executive and legislative councils. He was chair of the Committee on Rural Development and the Committee on Economic Affairs. Some of his legislative accomplishments include being the principal author or co-author of various bills on enhancing agricultural competitiveness, foreign investments and industrial competitiveness and capital market reforms. Among these was RA 8434 on modernizing and enhancing the profitability of the agricultural and fisheries sector and RA 6939 on creating the Cooperative Development Authority.

It was also his stint in politics that strengthened his ties with the rural folk with frequent visits to his constituency in the countryside. He also found opportunities to polish his communication skills. Being well-versed in economics and business, Teves learned, partly through his exposure in teaching economics at the Ateneo Graduate School of Business, to translate to plain language the complexities of running the economy to ordinary folk and the media.

Lessons from setbacks

Looking back at his career, Teves says that his career path was "a painful process." With a realization that he was not "that good," he made it a point to continuously learn and adjust to life in order to succeed. He points out, "Nothing in this life is really a bed of roses. You have to continuously earn it."

Teves' success is also greatly aided by his practical view of life's challenges. He advises young professionals not to be stopped by failures. "One thing that's difficult is when people linger too long on setbacks. Everybody has setbacks. Some people can adjust faster. If you have a setback, don't linger on it for more than 24 hours. Go back to normal."

With this philosophy strengthening his resolve and with effective communication skills, Teves seems to be in his element in Land Bank. Teves says he has worked harder in Land Bank than in any other organization. In a typical week, he attends to his duties in Manila from Monday to Thursday. Then, on Fridays every other week, he makes it a point to visit the provinces and touch base with his clients, the farmers and fisher folk.

Dreams

His driving force for this hectic schedule is his dream for Land Bank, "I'd like to see the bank become more financially sound so we can move stronger on a sustained basis on our mandate. We are the only bank, I think, that caters to small famers and fisherfolk." For these rural folk, Teves wants Land Bank to be seen not as an ordinary commercial bank. He explains, "I want them to feel that we care, that we are a friendly institution. I want to make it easy for them to make a profit from their savings and activities. So people will say, 'This is my bank.'"

Teves has high hopes for the Filipino workforce. He says Pinoys can become competitive in .the world market given the right combination of systems and men. He expounds, "When you have a good system, I would always say average or above average people will perform well. On the other hand, if you have a bad system, it will take an extraordinary individual or a set of individuals to do well." Teves, with his penchant for communicating in the simplest terms possible, likens this to a basketball team. "If you have a good system like Alaska, you don't need too many talents for the team to do well. Since it already has a good system, a disciplined foundation and good teamwork, every individual can perform well."

Today, Teves' work demands do not give him much time for his family although most his children are now grown up with kids of their own. He wishes though that he was able to give more time to his children when they were growing up. His advice to the young professionals who are raising families is to try to find a way to "work smart." Coming from a man who made unorthodox choices in his career, this is good advice indeed.

(Do you want to learn from Gary Teves' experiences? If you'd like him to be your career mentor, send your letters requesting for career advice to peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph. *He will answer your letters, together with other top CEOs, in the soon to be launched column, "Ask Your CEO" in People at Work. You can also catch him "live" in the upcoming People at Work Live! Seminar Series on May 27, 28 and 29. Call tel. No. 897-8808 local 554 for details.)*

TEVES, president and CEO of Land Bank of the Philippines

PHOTO BY ERIK ARAZAS

Mentors are your career guides

By Dr. Josie O. Santamaria
President, Career Systems, Inc.

(This is the seventh of a series of articles on career development strategies.)

ARE you a mentor or a tormentor? This is the title of a magazine article that describes how a mentor inspires a person to greater heights of achievement and how a "tormentor" demolishes his dreams and self-esteem.

In the work world, sometimes mentors may seem like tormentors. Remember Professor Higgins in "My Fair Lady?" He transformed Eliza Doolittle from an uneducated woman to a lady of refinement and in the process, nearly drove her to despair. Challenged, Eliza turned on her tormentor and proved him right.

Polishing "diamonds"

Fortunately, there are many successful people who look back with love and gratitude to mentors whom they credit for their achievements in their careers and even in their lives. Their mentors polished the raw "diamonds" in them .

A Philippine Marketing Association awardee recalls his own experience in benefiting from a mentor. When he was a production engineer 18 years ago, he presented a report, in behalf of the plant manager who was absent, to the management committee. During the break, the marketing vice president asked him what his career goal was. His immediate reply was that he wanted to be head of production and later on become plant manager. The marketing executive told him: "You know this is the second time I heard you give a presentation. You are not destined to be a production boss. You have good instincts for marketing..." That marketing vice president later talked to the plant manager and the human resource vice president to allow the engineer to change his career path. The engineer had to take a lower position as product assistant for eight months, but afterwards, he "leapfrogged" to higher positions as he pursued his career path in marketing. The engineer is now president and CEO of a marketing company. He says that making the career shift from production to marketing was the best career decision he had ever made.

A female president and CEO of an IT company acknowledged three beloved mentors: "I would never have made it to where I am now had it not been for them." She disclosed how one male and two female mentors passed to her their technical savvy and the values of stewardship, integrity, profit with honor and other ideals which distinguished their company from their competitors.

These inspiring stories show the value of mentoring in the success of individuals and companies. But mentoring is not a modern management buzzword. Mentoring was actually first illustrated in Greek mythology. In Homer's Odyssey, Odysseus was going off to war. He left his son Telemachus in the expert hands of a teacher named Mentor to protect and advise him. Mentor was more than a teacher. Because Mentor was actually the goddess Athena, he was half-god and half-man, half-male and half-female, believable and yet unreachable. He was the union of both goal and path and was wisdom personified.

Mentoring relationships

Today, more than 3,500 years later, mentoring relationships continue to be established. In many professions, mentors ensure the growth and stability of the profession, the organization and talented newcomers.

Many newcomers to the profession and even mid-career professionals, whether in an organization setting or outside of it, seek mentors when they want to learn new skills, develop new and higher levels of expertise, advance in the profession, gain a career foothold, or be given a boost up the corporate ladder.

Expert professionals who desire to become mentors, look at aspiring newcomers in their profession, such as in law, architecture, civil engineering, medicine, ballet, painting, economics, teaching and other areas and select the promising 'ones to develop and nurture.

What is a mentor? A mentor is an expert who takes a special interest in a younger person and who, through his actions and commitment, help the younger person, on : one-to-one basis, achieve his potentials, learn new skills and develop professional attitudes and behaviors. The mentor combines the roles of teacher, coach, guide, positive role model, adviser and advocate.

Mentoring responsibilities

The mentor is expected to learn new competencies and convey and uphold the standards, norms and values of the profession and those of the organization. He is responsible for offering support and challenge to the young promising employee, while the latter strives to fulfill the profession's expectations and live the company values.

The mentor of a high potential person is always an acknowledged expert in the profession or functional area. He is a part of the organization and steeped in its culture. He encourages the protégé to move confidently through a range of new experiences and make significant transitions in knowledge and skills. He helps the young person to improve in self-confidence and self-esteem, increase self- motivation, broaden his horizon, and raise levels of achievements and aspirations.

The mentor helps a person avoid being stymied by office politics. Many things go on in an organization that are not listed in its employee handbook. He teaches the young one, through words and actions, a consciousness of "accepted" behaviors that the protégé could not learn otherwise—like who to approach with certain problems or issues and who not to, when and where a certain activity may or may not be the norm, the soft and sore spots of important people and other organizational nuances.

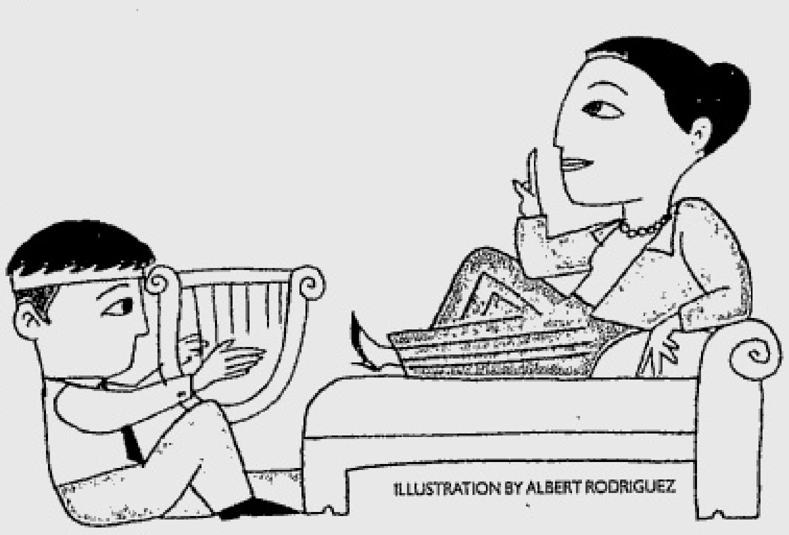
Organizational guide

This doesn't mean, though, that the protégé is taught to "play games" or to get around certain organizational structures. It is more like introducing a tourist to one's country. Nothing works better in learning an organization's culture than a guided tour by a "native." In short, a mentor can help a high flier understand what he has to know to prosper and grow in the specific organizational culture and political environment.

The mentor can give the protégé an appreciation of networking which, in this case, means recognizing and learning from other people in the organization who could help him grow professionally. In the process, the high flier develops an understanding of and appreciation for the "big picture" so that his value to the organization increases dramatically.

A high potential person can have one mentor for a project, or he can be assigned to several mentors as part of his over-all development. The mentors can even be in different geographical locations. For example, the mentor for finance of a high potential person can be in Manila, the one for marketing is based in Bangkok, the one for vision and strategy is based in Singapore. In these days of high technology, communication among them can be via teleconferencing and electronic mail.

Ideally, the direct supervisor of a high potential person is not assigned as mentor because the appraisal of current performance should not be affected by a special kind of mentor-protégé relationship. The mentor is responsible for learning; the supervisor, for performance. The protégé learns a new set of skills outside the area of his immediate supervisor.



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LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso** ◘ *Chief of Correspondents* **Pam Pastor**

to be young • to be you • to be young • to be you!

COFFEE on the GO!
COMBOS!
DUNKIN' DONUTS
P25
2 Regular-Sized Coffee

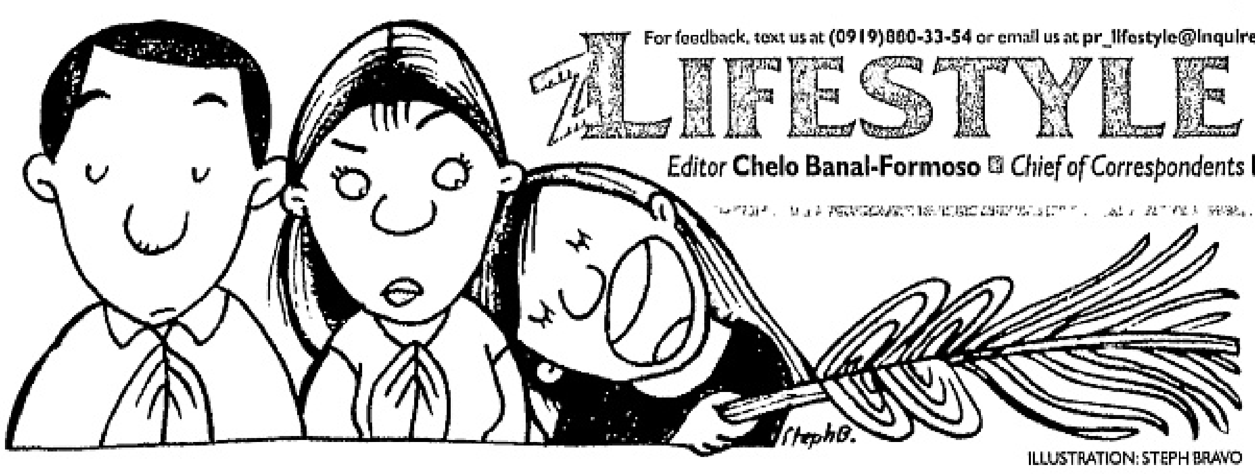


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

THE RELIGION SURVEY

The importance of being godly

84% of young respondents said their parents chose their religion for them. 50% said they did not completely understand the teachings of their religion. 73% said there were things they wanted to change about their religion. 27% say they wanted to change their religion

By Pam Pastor

"WHY DO you even ask these questions?" someone told me when he found out about this survey about religion. "I can't imagine anyone being able to answer this before the age of 25."

His statement—which expresses sentiments echoed by countless adults—is exactly one of the reasons we conducted this survey.

Very few people know what the youth have to say about religion. Most people don't bother to find out. Most people probably don't realize that young people have a lot to say about the subject.

We asked 30 young people, between the ages of 18 and 25 to tell us how they feel about religion, faith, prayer and worship.

Read on. These could be your children talking.

Seventy percent of the respondents are Roman Catholic, 10% are Born Again Christians, 9% are Iglesia ni Cristo, 8% are members of mainline Protestant denominations while 3% claim to be atheists.

One respondent's system of beliefs, though, isn't as clear-cut as the others. "I was baptized Roman Catholic and went to Catholic schools all my life. However, I was also raised with Chinese customs and traditions that were not in line with Catholic teachings, like praying to dead relatives and having more than one god," said Walter, 25.

Most people are born into their religion. Eighty-four percent of the respondents said their parents chose their religion for them. Only 16% said it was their personal choice.

"My parents (chose my religion) in the beginning, but later on, when I was 16, I chose it," said Lisa, 20.

Walter said, "I think my parents had me and my siblings baptized more as a convenience—for getting into school, for easier social integration, etc.—rather than for spiritual or religious reasons."

Not all the respondents were happy with their present religion. When asked if they would change their religion if they had the opportunity, 27% of the respondents said yes, 70% said no, while 3% remained undecided.

"No, almost everyone I know is Roman Catholic," 19-year-old Sam said.

Those who said they would change their religion had different things to say.

"(I'd choose) Taoism. Simplicity and humility as the way to peace and harmony in life," said Izzy, 19.

Family influence

Family history may influence young people's choices, just like in the case of Sam. "I am really interested in Sikhism. My maternal great-grandfather Ram Singh was Sikh. I never really got to know him, but my Lola tells me that my Lolo Ram would always go to the Sikh Temple somewhere in Manila. I personally think it would be nice if you have a different religion."

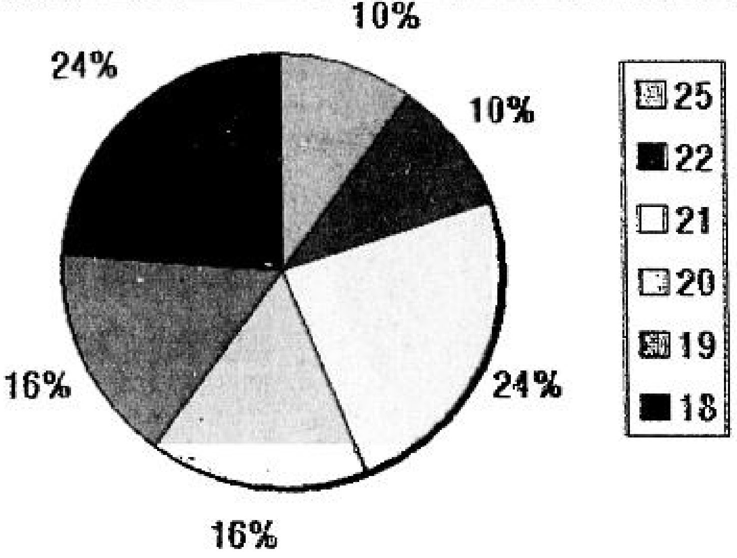
Buddhism seems a common possibility with these young people.

"My answer would be Buddhism. But the real kind of Buddhism that my great grandaunt practices is a way of life, not a religion. So I guess maybe one of the many Protestant sects," said Margot, 20.

"I was interested in Buddhism for a while,

THE IMPORTANCE/ C2

Age of respondents



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keyword: **lyingfru**
Figure
keyword: **figure**
From The Inside
keyword: **frdinsyd**
Nobody's Listening
keyword: **listening**

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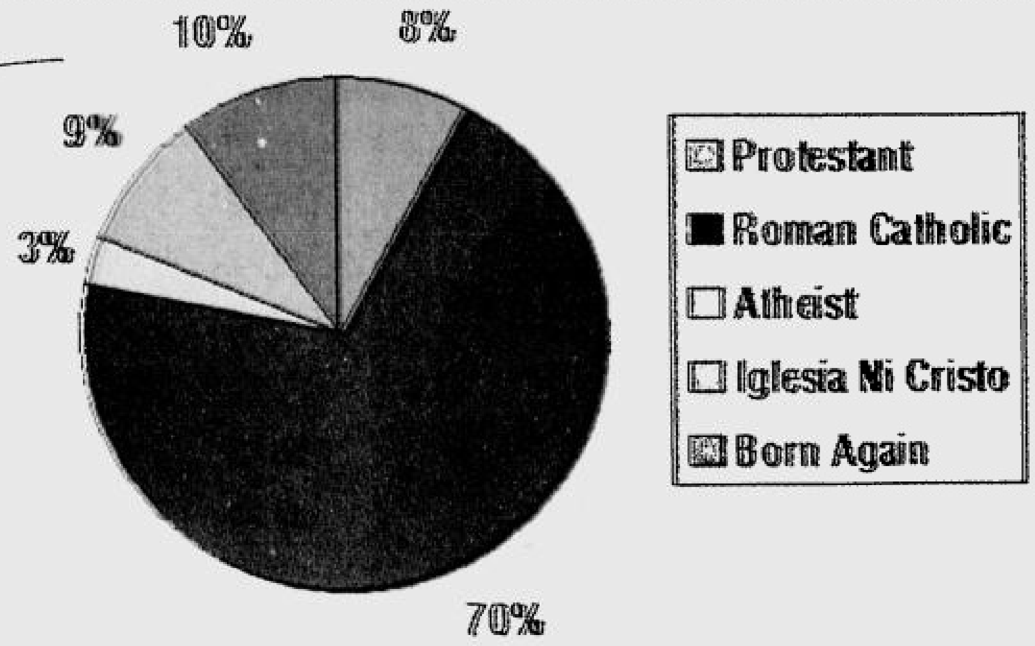
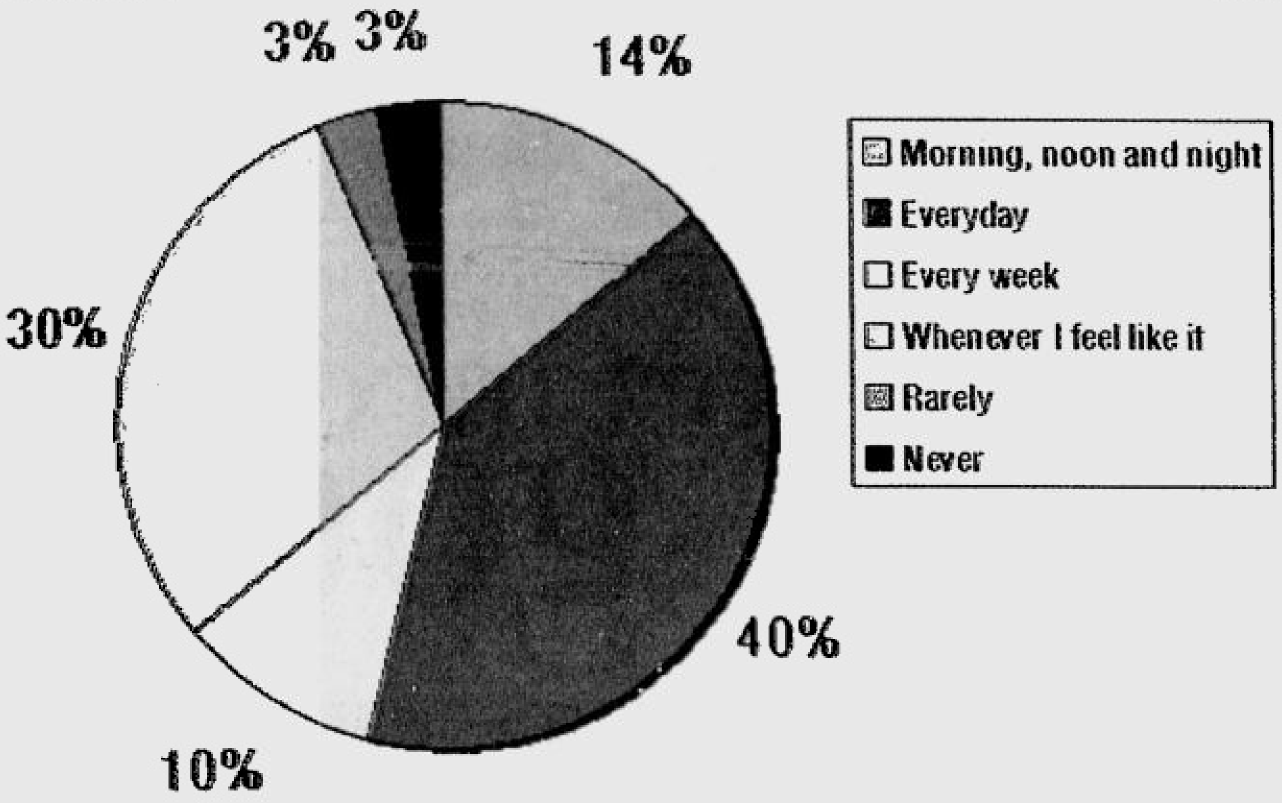
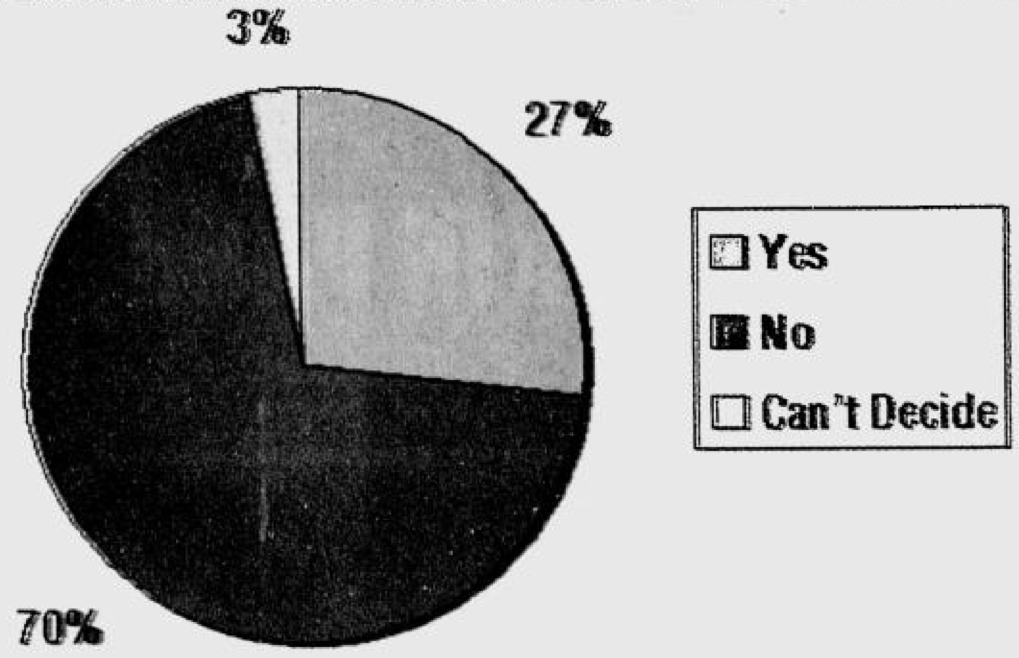
RELIGION



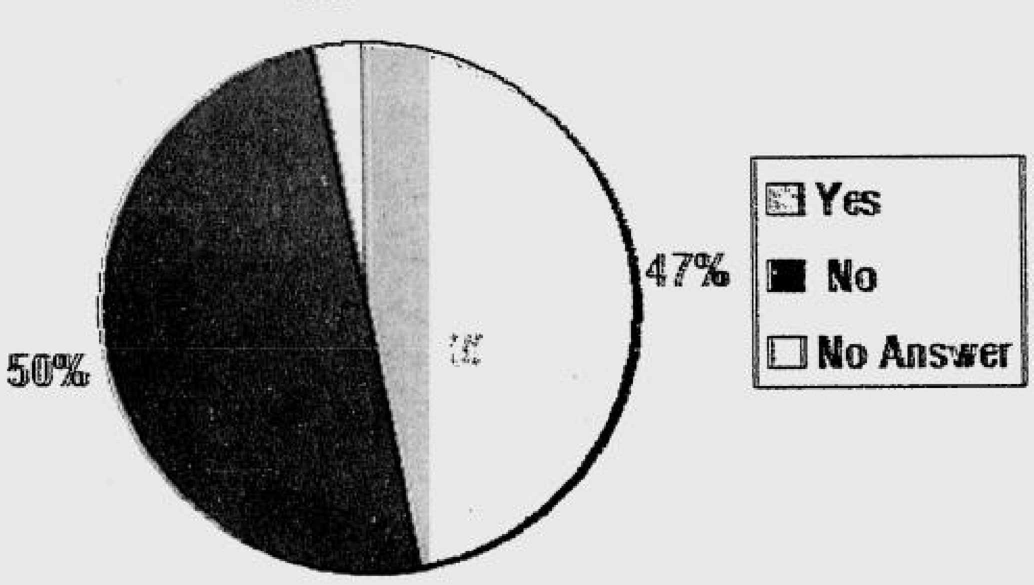
How often do you pray?



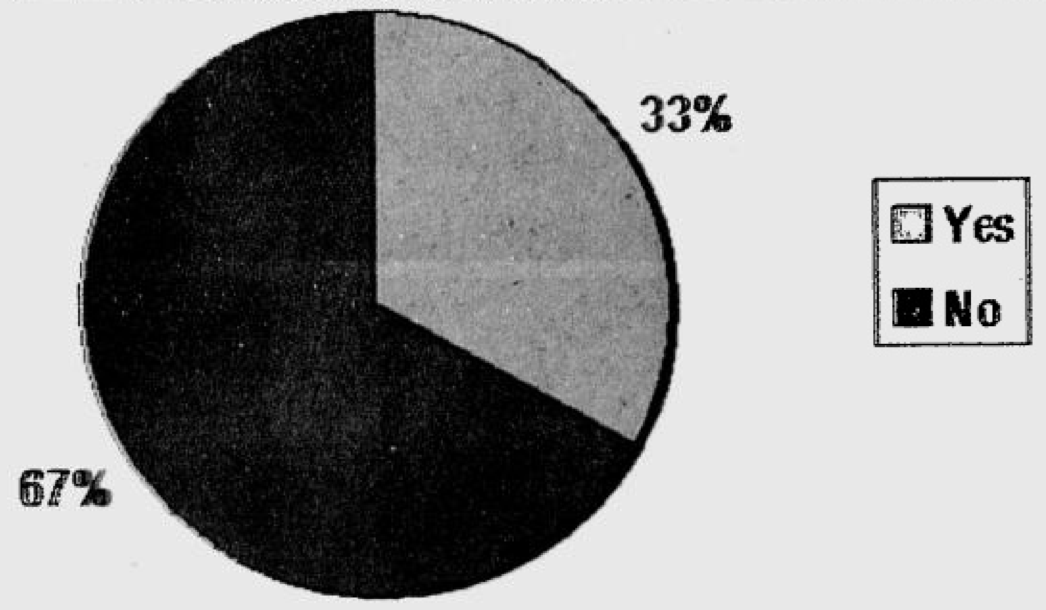
Would you change your religion?



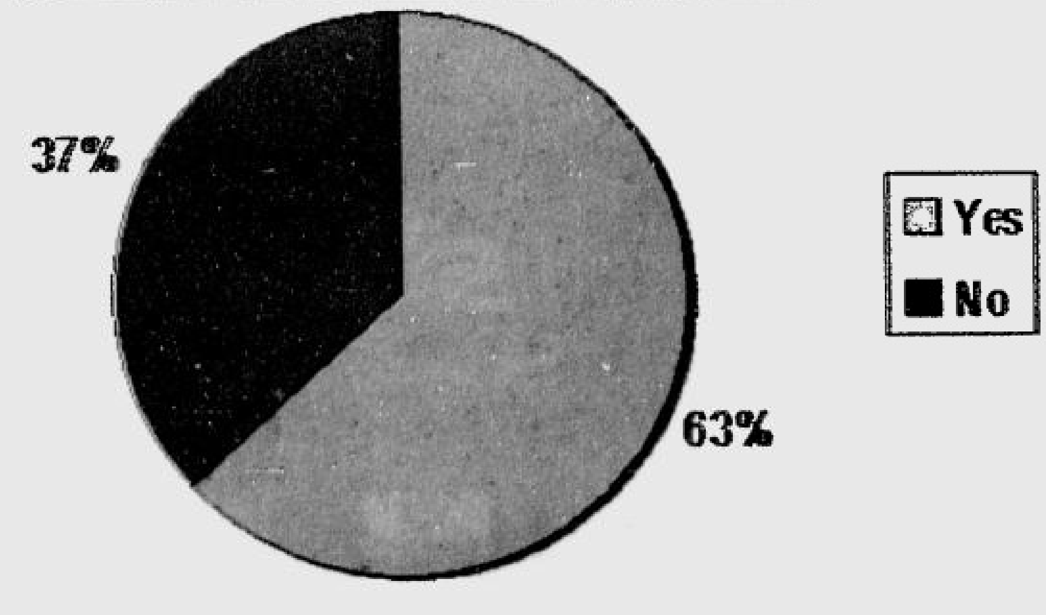
Do you completely understand the teachings of your religion?



Do you believe in all the teachings of your religion?



Do you go to your place of worship regularly?



The importance of being godly

From page C1

for the mere philosophy of life that it teaches. But I also realized that it lacked the religious and more doctrine-based faith of Catholicism such as belief in Christ, Mary and the Pope," said Maureen, 18.

CJ, 18, said, "Buddhism. *Basta* something that promotes self-realization and 'positivity.'"

For some of the respondents, no religion is the way to go, just like Walter ("I chose to believe in a divine power but not follow any one single religion.") and Kristine, 21 ("None, I'm happy not having a god ")

Melissa, 19, is one of those who still haven't decided. "I plan to give it a long thought in the future."

Understanding and believing

But do these young people fully understand the teachings of their religion? Fifty percent said no.

According to Shayn, 21, she can't understand why she can't love people from other religions.

"As for Chinese 'religious' customs, no one took time out to explain them to me, I usually just follow what the old people tell me to do like 'kneel and pray with incense' or 'eat this today because it's the day of the dead,'" Walter said.

Forty-seven percent said yes, they understood the teachings of their religion completely.

Melissa said, "I'd like to think so, after years of Catholic schooling."

Three percent refused to answer.

There is a difference between understanding and believing. Only 33% of the respondents said they believed in all the teachings of their religion.

"Although I'm not entirely convinced every doctrine is logical, I still believe in them nonetheless. I guess it's really a matter of faith —trusting even though you can't fully explain it," said Gem, 21.

Sixty-seven percent said they didn't believe in everything that their religion taught. They openly discussed the teachings they did not believe in.

"There are some teachings I question. Like divorce. If you've become a human punching bag for a man who neither respects nor loves you, why should you not be divorced?" said Lisa.

"The Church's stand on some issues in the country tends to contradict with my beliefs. For instance, I am pro-choice with regards to abortion, and I also do not believe that homosexuals are a disgrace to society," said Maureen, 19.

"(I don't agree with certain) norms actually, such as women not being allowed to become priests," said Cathy, 19. "Maybe I just don't understand the reasons, but I don't see why there's gender discrimination."

" (I don't agree) that the Pope is infallible, that contraception should not be allowed, that we must go to confession for our sins to be forgiven," said Margot.

"I think the Catholic Church has closed views on certain things, like contraception, pre-marital sex and on homosexuality. I think the Catholic Church should try to grow with the country and with the demands of globalization," said Sam.

Prayer

Prayer is an essential part of religion. Forty percent of the respondents said they prayed every day, 30% prayed whenever they felt like it, 14% prayed morning, noon and night, 10% prayed every week, 3% rarely prayed and 3% never prayed.

Sixty-three percent of the respondents said they went to church regularly.

Some young people expressed enthusiasm for going to worship.

JP, 20, said. "It's a sanctuary for me. I feel His presence there."

Without hearing Mass, "the week feels incomplete," according to Jayvi, 22.

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

'Ministry is my way of thanking God for the gift of life, and for all that I've been blessed with'

Others appreciated the solemnity of religious services. "Yes, because sometimes I feel more at peace praying in a silent church than in a noisy room like my bedroom," said Lisa. "And there's something about praying with the rest of the faithful in church."

"I find solace there," said Chiquit, 25. "I know it's just a place, and that God is with me everywhere I am, but I feel him most when I'm with people who believe the same things I believe. And by going to church, I'm also honoring the Sabbath, as commanded."

Others were not given a choice. "My mother drags me and my siblings to mass," said Izzy.

Nineteen-year-old Sam said, "Unfortunately, I'm not really a practicing Catholic. I go to church whenever I can. ROTC kept me from going to church on Sundays. I believe that the church is not the only place where you can pray and worship God."

The other 37% did not go to their places of worship regularly.

Maureen, 18, said, "It was not required of us when we were kids so the habit was not carried over."

Twenty-year-old Margot said, "I don't go to Mass because I hate the ritualistic aspect of it."

"(The church is) also known as house of ostentation and... hassle," said Raya, 18.

Seventy percent of the respondents said they were not active in their church.

"I dont believe in worshipping in the conventional way," said CJ.

"(I'm) too lazy. Sucking up to God is more my mother's style than mine," said S, 21.

"I used to be active in Church but school has been keeping me busy, I would love to be an active member of the parish but I believe that you can serve God in other ways," said Sam.

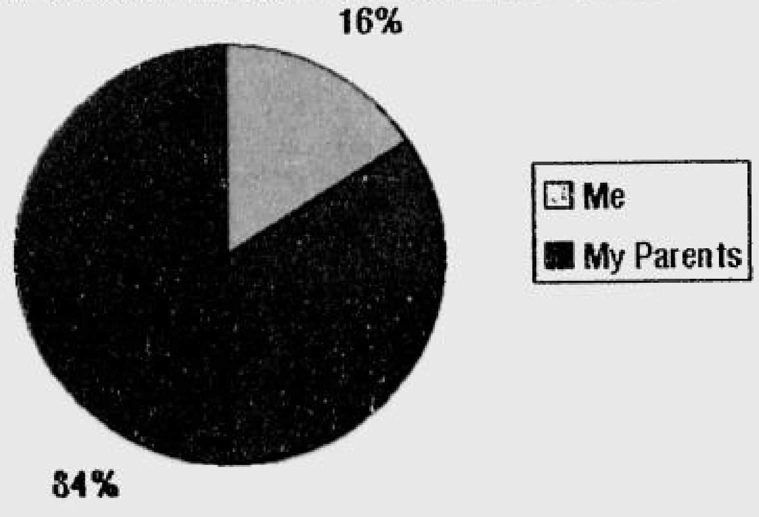
"No church activities for my age. Those for me are useless, *sosyalan lang*," said Tammy, 19.

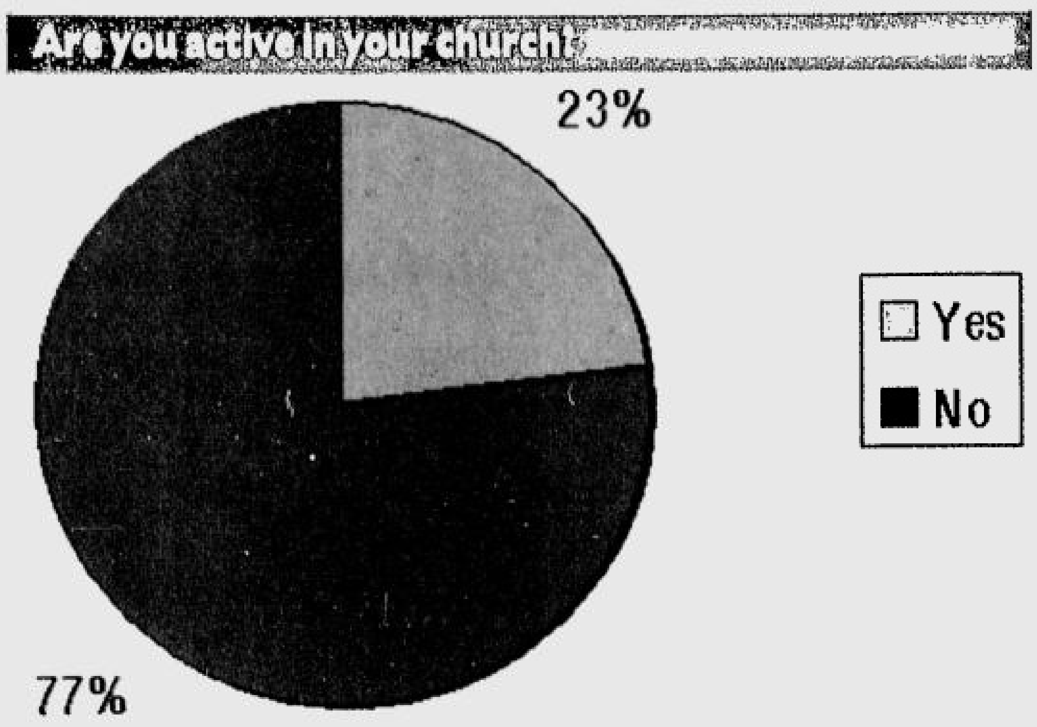
"I don't like the people (in the church). I (think they are) hypocrites," said Izzy.

"(It's) lack of interest, I guess," said Melissa. "To be honest, religion has never been that much of a priority to me."

THE IMPORTANCE/ C3

Who chose your religion?





From page C2

Active in church

Twenty percent said they were active in church.

"Yes. It's one way of giving my talents back to the Lord," said JP.

"Singing makes me feel good," said Melissa. "It feels like I'm giving something back instead of just being a passive viewer."

"Ministry is my way of thanking God for the gift of life, and for all that I've been blessed with," said Chiquit. "It's my way of thanking the people in my church who have nurtured me since I was a baby in Sunday school, a little girl in children's choir, a troubled teen in youth group. I see it as my turn to give."

Seventy-three percent of the respondents were not completely happy with their religion and wished to change some things. A lot of the respondents believed the attitudes of people from their religion needed more work.

CJ asked, "Can hypocrisy be eliminated?"

"I don't like self-righteous, admonishing, know-it-all people who think they have more chances of going to heaven than me," another respondent said.

"And I don't like people who don't respect other people's religions."

"The hypocrisy, corruption, and self-righteousness of the people, even the church leaders," Felice, 18, said.

Maureen, 18, said: "Some holier-than-thou attitudes of some of the church leaders tend to annoy me... religion should be 'Christian' in nature, that is, accepting everyone regardless of race, gender, religion, etc."

Other respondents focused on other things.

"Should gluttony really be a mortal sin?" asked Melissa.

Maui, 19, said she was not comfortable with Cardinal Jaime Sin always getting involved in political issues. "I also think birth control should get a thumbs-up."

"I wish that the Catholic Church would accept the realities of life and try to solve the problems taking by these realities into consideration," said Sam. "Their views on certain things like homosexuality, PMS (premarital sex) and contraception are somewhat unreasonable. I would want the Church to stop engaging in (issues) that concerns the State."

Walter wanted changes in the Church's "condescension towards its laity and its outdated views on women, sex, homosexuality, moral codes, etc."

"The Church tends to be too ritualistic," said Kid, 21.

"The church hierarchy (should be changed)," said Margot, "contraception should be allowed, rituals should become more personal and less of a chore."

Twenty-seven percent did not wish to change anything. "You either take it as it is or leave it," said JV.

Religion's importance

The respondents have very different ideas on the importance of religion in their lives. Thirty-six percent said it was slightly important, 20% said it was very important, 17% said it was extremely important, 10% said it was important, 7% said it was not important, 7% said they didn't know and 3% didn't want to

THE IMPORTANCE/ C4

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The importance of being godly

From page C3

say how important religion was in their lives.

A lot of the respondents agreed that spirituality and having a personal relationship with their God were more important than religion.

"Religion gives me the power to believe in myself and other things," said Sam. "The idea of someone watching you from above gives me strength to face problems head on. I know that someone up there is taking care of me. I make mistakes, just like everybody else. Believing that God forgives makes life a whole lot easier."

"Religion isn't really important to me; my faith is, though," said CJ.

"It's the personal relationship you have with God that counts," said Chiquit, "but as humans, we need the norms and practices of a religion to keep us in line, to comfort us, to remind us of our relationship with God."

"I don't really care much about religion because in essence they're all the same anyway," said Margot. "What's more important to me is that I maintain a personal relationship with a God that I recognize, and that no matter what my approach or angle may be with regard to worshipping him or believing in him, everything must come from the heart and should not be taken for granted."

"I think spirituality is a lot more important than being religious and being pious," said Walter.

"You never really understand the value of religion unless you have a deep personal experience involving it," said JV. "You never really appreciate a person unless he or she changes your life."

"I'd rather pray and talk to God directly," said Izzy. "I believe that there is a God, a higher being. It's just a matter of faith. I feel that you don't need an organized religion to feel close to God and to feel that he hears your prayers, your innermost thoughts and aspirations."

If there's something remarkable about the results of this survey, it's this: Not a single respondent expressed disdain about the existence of other religions. No answers indicated that they thought what they believed in was of more value than what people from other religions believed in. In fact, a lot of them urged respect for other religions.

Twenty-year-old Izzy said, "Some priests tell the people ridiculous, discriminative things against other religions. I believe that people should respect others' religions."

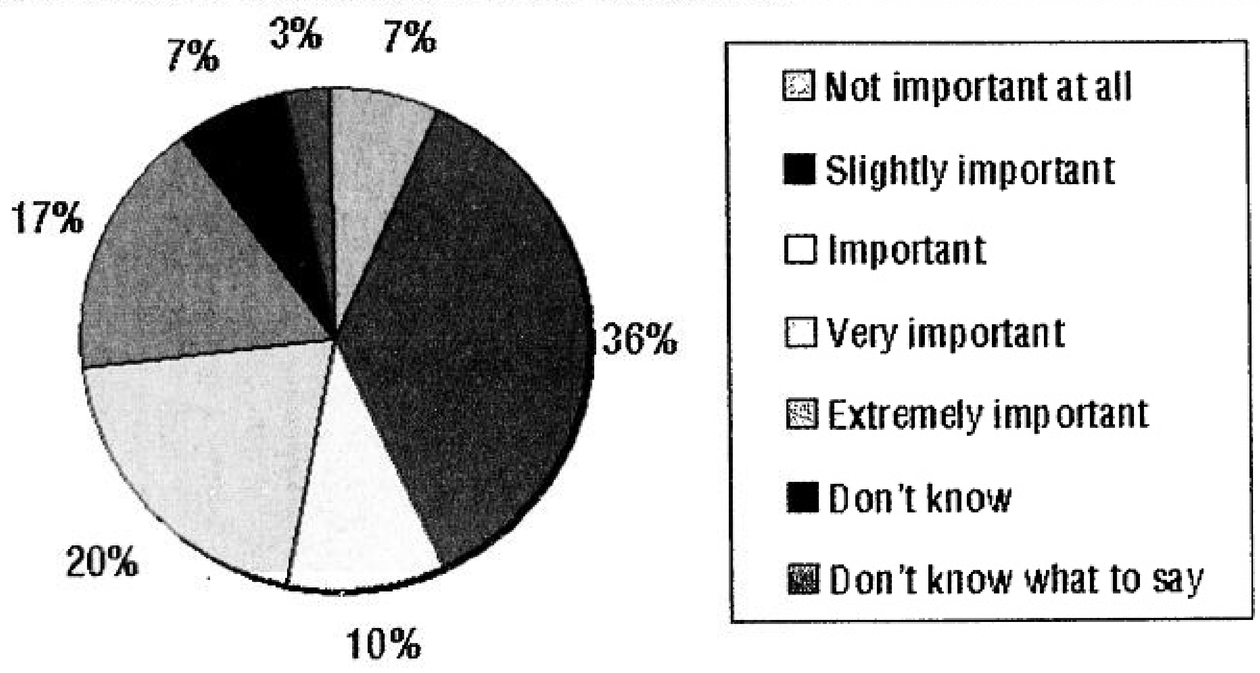
Twenty-five-year-old Walter added, "If God is as all knowing and all compassionate as most religions say he or she is, *siguro naman* carry *lang kung iba-iba ang* style *natin* of communicating and worshipping him or her *'di ba?*"

Yes, these people have not been around too long. They have a long way to go. But their young minds possess enough wisdom to realize the importance of respect for others in a world that has long ceased to be harmonious. And that's something the rest of the world can learn from.

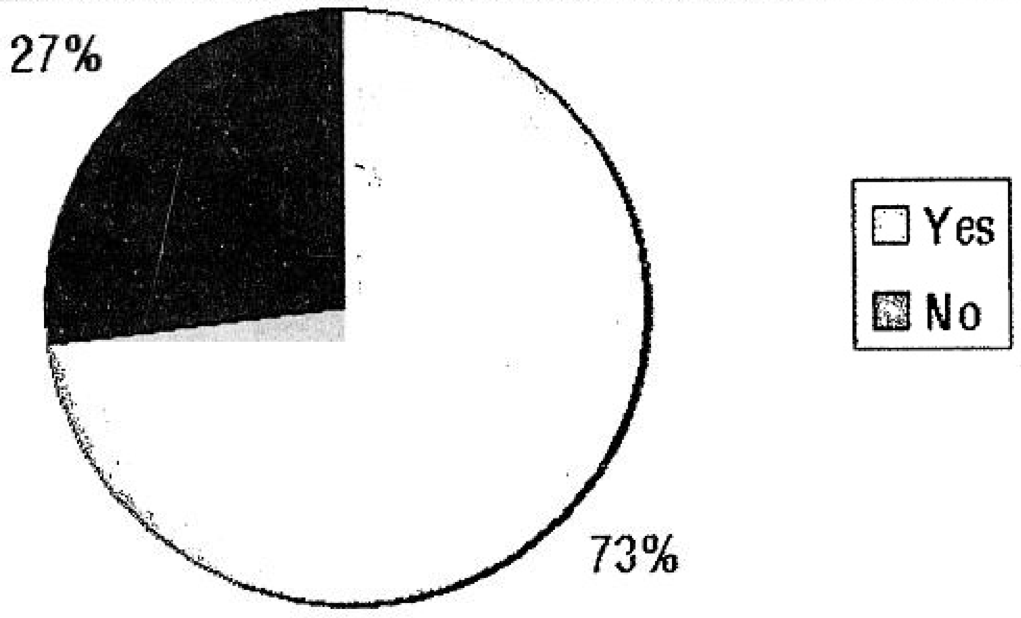
E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph

'I believe that people should respect others' religions'

How important is religion in your life?



Are there things you wish you could change about your religion?



Religion according to today's youth

"RELIGION is a way of life."—**Kid, 21**

"I think Catholics would understand religion a lot more if we have something like the bar mitzvah of the Jewish." —**Cathy, 19**

"I give more importance to my spirituality and my whole being. Religion is man-made, and therefore flawed. It's a formality, though, that man needs in order to have something concrete to believe in. I don't think religion is essential in life, but spirituality is definitely essential, because that's where morality and a good heart stems from. I have nothing against religion though, if you believe that it will complement your spirituality."—**Maureen, 18**

"I think one main purpose of establishing religions, aside from giving people hope of course, is to instill proper values and morals in their followers. Some people completely embrace the religion they were born into. I'd like to keep an open mind about the other religions out there. Soon, maybe when I graduate next year, I'd like to check out the teachings, values and beliefs of other religion. I'm not saying I don't like being a Catholic. But I want to be able to choose my religion and not just accept it blindly because my parents/society says so. If I'm to remain a Catholic, I want it to be my choice."

"I think all of us want something to believe in, that's why we choose to belong to a religion. If at all, having a religion makes us believe that things will be okay in the end and that there is a reason for everything. For some, it helps to have a 'higher being' to blame."—**Lisa, 20**

"He will always be there... no matter what! So get those lazy asses marching to your place of worship and start thanking the Big Guy for all the blessings He has given!"—**JP, 20**

"Religion is not supposed to control our lives."—**Christian, 18**

"Your faith will save you; your religion won't."—**CJ**

"I want to convert to Islam *sana* but I love my pork."—**Tammy, 19**

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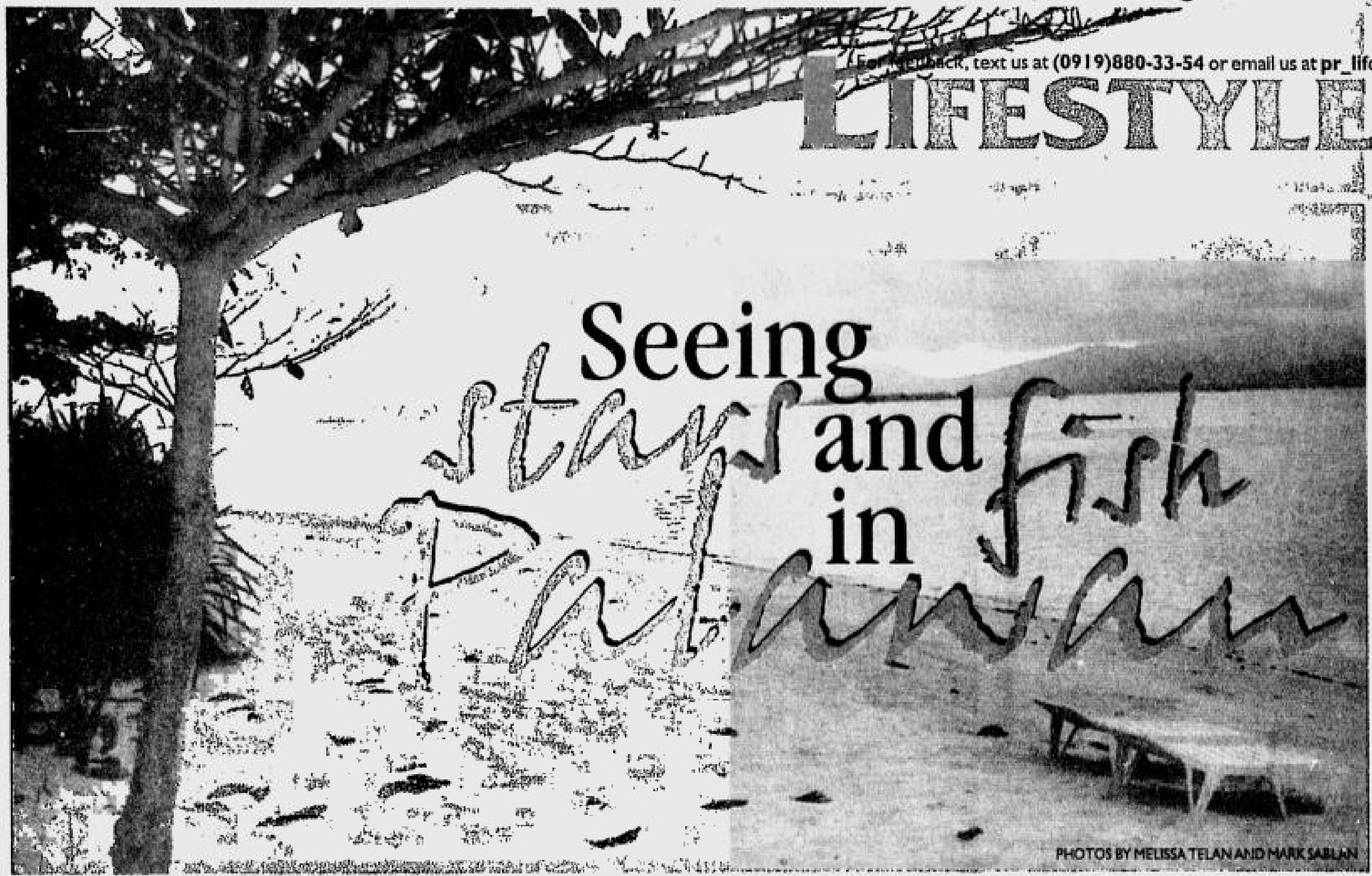

Seeing stars and fish in Palawan

PHOTOS BY MELISSA TELAN AND MARK SABLAN

Sky and sea seem to converge in picture-perfect province

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

PALAWAN is truly the paradise a lot of people say it is, with fine white sands, soothing blue waters, ultra-bright sunshine and fresh cool breeze.

Any time of the year, the picture-perfect province is an ideal place for a lot of R and R. But Palawan is not just for the laid-back traveler. For the adventurous, there is a long list of adrenaline-pumping activities to enjoy. From indoor activities in Dos Palmas to water sports in nearby coasts, from must-see destinations to must-eat concoctions, Palawan seems to have it all.

The Dos Palmas Arreceffi Island Resort was our base during our four-day stay in Palawan. Apart from the topnotch facilities and relaxing ambience, the resort's staff really made our stay enjoyable.

The Dos Palmas dudes and dudettes were an amazing lot—helpful, cheerful and polite at all times. Sales and marketing manager Leeds Trompeta was a ball of energy who never ran out of interesting bits to share. Resident manager Lybanor Godio always had good suggestions, but never hesitated to listen to what others had to say. Vikkie Castro, who does PR for Dos Palmas, answered each and every question asked, even if some were not about the place anymore.

Surrounded by nature at its best and people almost kissing my well-pedicured toes, I felt like King Triton in Dos Palmas—special, significant, important. And it's not just because I had a king-sized bed to retire to every night.

Face to face with jellyfish

My "minions" constantly invited me to try all sorts of stuff, much to my annoyance. I was urged to try scuba diving, and even though I was very apprehensive, I went 20 feet underwater for 20 minutes, much to the delight of my "followers." Down there, I was among pink, fuchsia, lavender, purple and periwinkle corals and sea anemones. Almost everything was in pastel and I nearly broke into one of the "Little Mermaid" songs.

At one point my guide shoved a jellyfish almost to my face, and urged me to touch it. I made a scene underwater for about two minutes until I realized that the jellyfish was just bits of bread trapped in a plastic bag.

It turned out that my guide was having a tough time dislodging the bread, and was actually in need of help.

Raining bats and stuff

The Underground River Park was an amazing experience. Even though the trek made me feel as if God didn't love us, the boat ride to the bat cave made up for all the physical "abuse" we suffered. The rock formation gallery was truly a visual feast, and the bats were, well, they were kind enough to give us a drizzle and not a storm.

I went snorkeling for the first time in Palawan. After a quick briefing, I plunged into the vast ocean to take a peek at some marine happenings. While staring at dull, motionless corals staring back at me, saltwater would sometimes get into my mouth.

When that happened, I followed my guide's reminder and let out a passionate blow through my mouth to let the air push the saltwater out of my snorkel.

My guide would utter an encouraging "Good, good" when I did that. But one time, thinking I was having a difficult time expelling the saltwater, he screamed, "Blow hard, blow harder!"

I swear when I heard that, I laughed my lungs out, gulping even more seawater and nearly dying—of laughter.

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Cave of wonders

THE PUERTO Princesa Subterranean River park is one thrill ride like no other.

PHOTOS BY MARK SABLAN AND MELISSA TELAN

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

IF, by some luck, you find yourself in Palawan, include in your itinerary the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park. It has been declared a national park to protect and preserve the outstanding biophysical properties of the area and one of its special features is an extensive underground river system.

Using the Dos Palmas Arreceffi Island Resort as base, one needs to take a boat ride to the Sta. Lourdes Wharf (for approximately an hour) and then bear a two-hour seriously bumpy road trip to the town of Sabang.

Once in Sabang, one can snack a bit, shop for souvenirs and take a quick pee. But most probably, one can either trek or enjoy a boat ride to experience the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park a.k.a. the Underground River Park for those who are too lazy to let out a mouthful.

Zo and Maggie of Cosmopolitan, the dudes and dudettes from Dos Palmas, fellow 2bU! correspondent Melissa Anne Telan and I gathered into a circle and agreed on trekking to the destination so we could just relax on the way back to Sabang.

There are two routes to choose from: the monkey trail meant for the "chickens" and the longer, more grueling jungle trail for masochists or the perpetually energized. Since my companions and I didn't have any illusions that we were strong and courageous, we opted for the monkey trail. We felt good about ourselves and were excited to see the chimps.

Green Gallery and Zoo

And so we began our trek. The first minute of the trek was fun. We felt like Indiana Jones armed with enough sunblock and mineral water. After that, however, we ran out of water and waves of sweat started to wash away our protection.

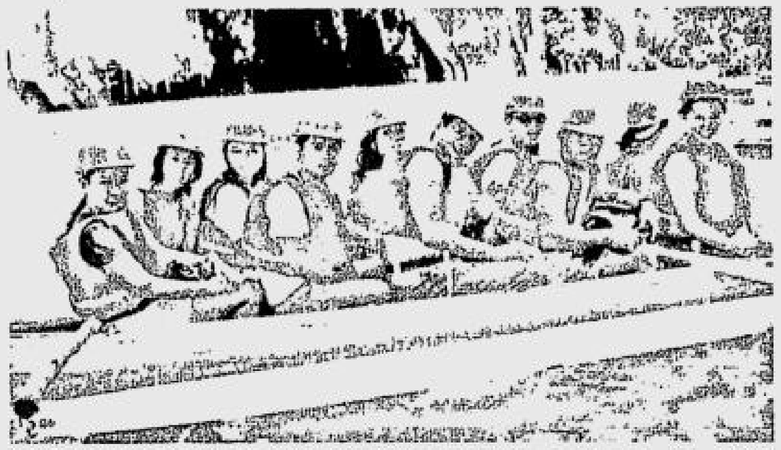
It seemed like an endless uphill downhill joke that wasn't a bit funny. It also didn't feel like our destination was near even if our guide assured us that it was. We pestered the guide with our incessant question, "Are we there yet?"

Because our legs were wobbly and our heartbeats were beating fast, it was hard to focus on the beauty of the place. Fortunately for us, our frequent breath-catching breaks allowed us to appreciate the place.

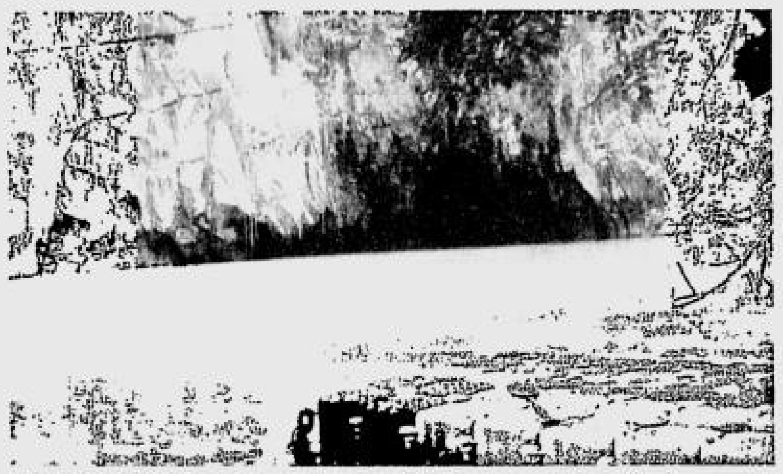
The trek introduced me to the various shades of green. It was like one huge green exhibit, but other colors made their presence seen as well. The dark blue waters soothed our tired eyes. The brown barks, branches and logs provided a rustic feel to the trek. And bright red, almost neon-like, bugs were a beautiful distraction.

The monkeys in our monkey trail-trek were such a nice sight. Our guide, however, didn't feel as nice toward the monkeys, warning us that they could be mischievous and harmful.

What I didn't know while I was complaining with every painful and tiring step I made, was that the park is a Unesco World Heritage Site, home sweet home to 800 kinds of plants, 295 kinds of trees, 90 species of birds, 30 types of mammals, 18 various reptiles and 10 species of amphibians. I wish I saw all of them.



ALL LINED UP IN THEIR ORANGE BEST. 2bU ! Correspondents Mark and Mel and their companions posing before going into the bat cave.



THE ENTRANCE to the enchanting Underground River Park

To the bat cave

So after three hours of producing gallons of sweat and abusing our leg muscles, we finally arrived at our destination, welcomed by lots of food, monkeys and *bayawak*. Body aches, lack of breath and other complaints were instantly forgotten as we dug in for food.

It was quite an interesting experience to feast on seafood and veggies while surrounded by animals.

Imagine chewing your squid while enjoying a parade of *bayawak*, or quickly trying to finish your banana so that monkeys won't see you and jump after your treat.

After sufficient burping, we quickly proceeded with the highlight of the trek: the trip to the cave that houses countless stalactites, stalagmites and bats.

Garbed in hard hats and life vests, our little group of 10 (plus the humorous guide who paddled our boat in and out of the cave) penetrated the pitch-black darkness of the cave, which suddenly came to life when we switched on our spotlight.

Seated comfortably in our boat, we almost had stiff necks as we marveled at the various rock formations in the stalactites and stalagmites. (For those of you who didn't listen to your science teachers back in grade school, stalactites resemble an icicle hanging from the roof or sides of a cavern, while stalagmites are like an inverted stalactite formed on the floor of a cave.)

Some stalactites looked like dinosaurs and chicken heads, while some stalagmites resembled a huge mushroom, a giant candle and a curvaceous woman's back, complete with a boob peeking. The cave even had a *palengke* section that offers rock formations in the shape of different fruits and vegetables.

Another jaw-dropping sight was that of the bats that littered the whole cave. They dotted the cave's ceilings and looked like little black chandeliers.

There was even a huge bunch of bats that collectively hung out together looking like a clump of grapes.

We were so mesmerized with the nocturnals' presence that our guide had to remind us to pick up our jaws.

The obedient beings that we were, we quickly closed our mouths, especially when he mentioned something about bat pee.

The hour or so that we spent inside the cave seemed too short when we exited from the place. Nevertheless, it was an amazing experience that left our mouths wide open.

Of baits and more bats

Going back to the town of Sabang, the guys kept their word so we took a boat ride instead of trekking.

We passed by Bat Island where multitudes of these mammals reportedly fly out every 6:30 p.m. But since we were a little too early, we donned our fisherman's caps and threw in our baits, while enjoying champagne and barbecued mussels with papaya cubes.

One of our companions caught two fishes, which looked like they had hydrocephalus, and out of pity, freed them. I didn't have any luck in the hook, line and sinker division, but despite this I consider myself lucky for having eaten the most number of mussels, which was the best thing I tasted during the whole Palawan experience.

Back to the bats now. At exactly 6:30 p.m., just as we were told, the bats, as if on cue, suddenly scampered from the place and flew in different directions. I don't know exactly know how large they were, but trust me when I say that they were large, basing from the ones that flew directly above our boat.

The sight spooked some of the girls, but I just loved it. There's something simply romantic and passionate about bats and their pointed wings, especially at dusk.

As the night grew older and the darkness blacker, we continued our ride back to our base, our boat hitting the waves, our bodies dying to hit the bed. But despite the long day and our throbbing muscles, we knew that we couldn't afford to rest because Palawan, no matter how laid-back, is simply a place packed with adventures and misadventures to enjoy, remember and capture on my six rolls of film.

E-mail the author at katotino@yahoo.com

Must-see places in Palawan

By Melissa Telan
2bU! Correspondent

IT is highly unlikely you will be able to see the 1,700 or so islands of Palawan but there are some places you should put at the top of your list.

El Nido

Named after the edible nests of swiftlets (a kind of swallow) that live in the crevices of limestone cliffs, El Nido boasts of spectacular flora and fauna. You will be awed by the limestone islands, which are only found here.

See El Nido's thick rainforests with their countless varieties of birds and trees. Cool off by taking a plunge in the jade waters and enjoy the abundant marine life below.

If you are lucky, you might even see bird's nests gatherers at work. Their job is actually dangerous. Bird's nests, made of swiftlets' gelatinous saliva, are difficult to collect because they are located high up the steep limestone caves. The hazardous location has caused the loss of many lives in failed attempts to acquire them.

Despite this, bird nest gatherers are willing to take a risk because a kilo of the stuff sells for P120,000.

Tabon Cave

Tabon Cave is located 150 km south of Puerto Princesa. To get there means going on a 3½-hour bus ride to Quezon and a 20-minute boat trip to the caves. The curious would find the caves interesting for it was there where anthropologists discovered the remains of the 22,000-year-old Tabon Man, considered one of the earliest humans ever discovered, decades ago.

Hours of cave trekking in the different passages and chambers can be enjoyed. The flora and fauna in this part are similar to those in Borneo or Malaysia than to other parts of the Philippines.

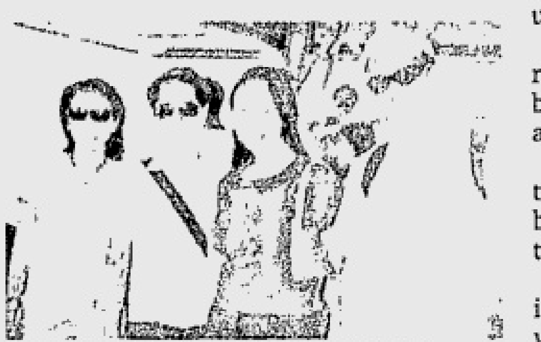
Honda Bay

A great way to spend a day in Palawan is to go island-hopping in Honda Bay. Almost each one of the several islets in the bay has an interesting story about how it got its name.

One island is called Lu-li, short for *lubog-litaw*, because it is only seen at low tide. Another is called Starfish because of its large colony of the marine creatures. Snake Island is so-called not because the reptiles abound there but because it is shaped like one. Flocks of giant fruit bats appropriately enough emerge from Bat Island at dusk.

PUERTO Princesa's Kamarikutan Kape at Galeri offers good food, fine craftwork and rustic ambience.

The eco-tourism capital of the Philippines has 1,700 islands to be explored



2bU!'S Mark and Mel with Dos Palmas managers Lyba Godio and Leeds Trompeta

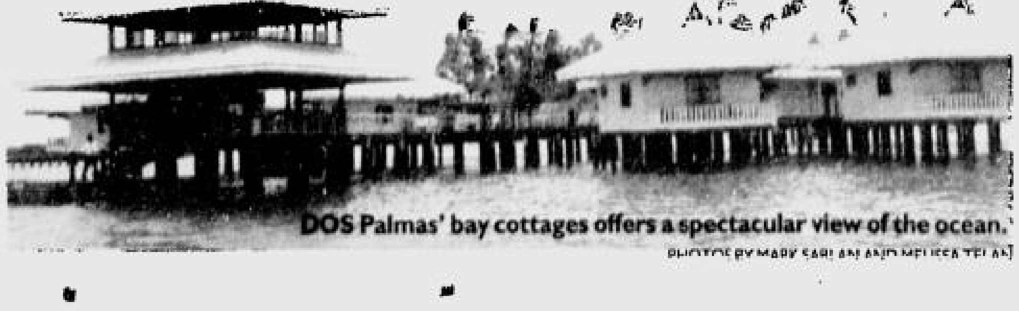
Dos Palmas Arreccefi Island Resort

If you are island-hopping, you may want to spend a day at the last island in Honda Bay—Dos Palmas Arreccefi. The resort offers a day-tour package for P1,200, which includes a welcome drink, lunch buffet and free use of the facilities.

Try snorkeling at the colorful shallow reefs of Helen's Garden (a two-minute boat ride from the resort), or go kayaking around the island through the mangroves.

After the water activities, you may want to spend the rest of the day at the karaoke bar or simply loll around and drink in the tranquil ambiance of the island.

You may want to stay at the resort, availing of their promo until the end of June which includes air travel via Air Philippines and a three-day/two-night stay inclusive of meals and use of their facilities for P15,999.



DOS Palmas' bay cottages offers a spectacular view of the ocean.

PHOTOS BY MARK SABLAN AND MELISSA TELAN

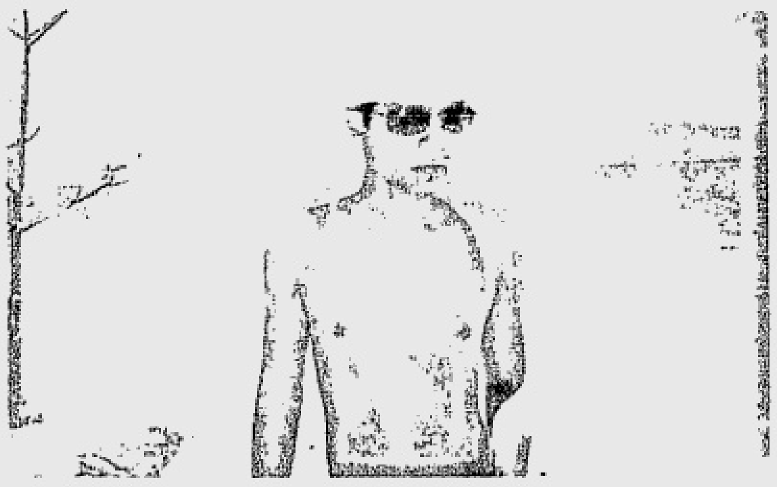
Puerto Princessa Subterranean River Park

Considered one of the world's wonders, the underground river is 8 km long and can be accessed through a tunnel on a paddle boat. Watch out for bat droppings while inside. But to fully appreciate the underground river experience, take the 4.7-km trek via the Monkey Trail, which starts in Sabang. *(See related story on this page)*

Kamarikutan Kape + Galeri

A few minutes from the Puerto Princesa airport, on Rizal Avenue, is a coffee shop and art gallery called Kamarikutan. It's rustic ambiance is ideal for those wanting brief respite from the city. Aside from serving a variety of beverages and dishes—from coffee to pasta—the place is also a veritable showcase of Palawan artistry. In Kamarikutan, you can buy unique craftwork like bead bracelets and journals with painted covers, and paintings.

For more information about Palawan, visit http://www.palawan.com.



STAR-STRUCK Mark, the wannabe star

Seeing stars and fish in Palawan

From page D1

the place all to our selfish selves. It proved to be an advantage (like when we wanted to have the whole pool or when there was a buffet), but it did get lonely and creepy at certain moments.

Since we were in Dos Palmas a year after matinee idol Rico Yan passed away, it was inevitable that everybody would remember and mention him.

One karaoke night, enjoying margaritas, beer and Bailey's Irish cream, everybody was having a blast singing songs like "Ice Ice Baby," "Humanap Ka Ng Panget" and "Under The Sea."

One of our companions then decided to do Color It Red's "Paglisan." We told the singer to give a proper rendition and requested her to dedicate the song to Yan. I noticed that my hand was resting on the song book and my index finger pointing in the direction of a Salt N Pepa and En Vogue collaboration—something called "Whattaman."

Yan didn't show himself to us, but our trip to Palawan sure showered us with lots of stars. In the airport, I crossed paths with Vince Hizon and his teammates, and when I got to the terminal, I discovered genius Yoyoy Villame and daughter Hannahgene seated in front of me. I also noticed that Leeds looked a lot like Matet's show-biz boyfriend, while Cosmopolitan's Zo resembled Tweetie de Leon, and Maggie was a combination of Ara Mina, Gladys Reyes and Ces Quesada.

E-mail the author at katotino@yahoo.com

SIT DOWN, SIT DOWN. Mark and Mel enjoy the winds and the waves of Palawan on a speedboat.

Having no boyfriend causes low self-esteem

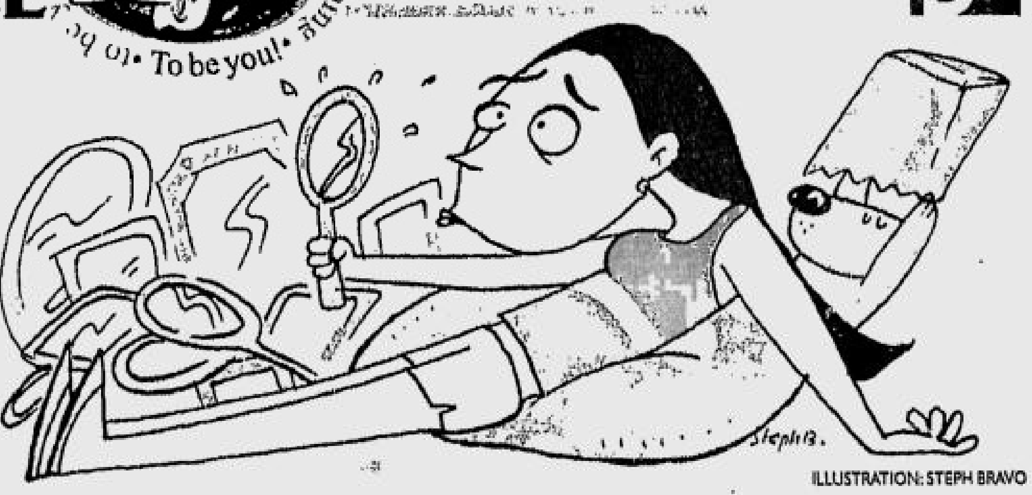


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Niño Mark Sablan
& September Mabino

DEAR Sep and Mark,

I'm 18 years old, and a lot of people tell me that I am pretty, sexy and have a wonderful personality. I have a handful of admirers, but I don't like most of them. I've had boyfriends before, but the longest relationship lasted for only a month. Some of them said that I was too good for them, while my friends theorize that some of the boys just wanted to find out if they could "get" me. I don't have a boyfriend right now and I'm starting to have low self-esteem.

LT STABILO

Dear Miss Pretty, Sexy and Wonderful Personality, someone must quickly conk you on the head so you'll realize that the absence of a boyfriend doesn't necessarily mean that life is useless or that it should be ended. It's not as if you are an old maid or you haven't had a single boyfriend ever. In fact, you already had more than one boyfriend, but unfortunately, it lasted for only 30 days or so. I know it's pretty futile to have thousands of admirers and not fancy any of them, but look at the brighter side. At least, you have thousands drooling for you. Some people out there would drink a pool of drool just to have someone fancy them, whether they like the person or not.

Don't always believe it when men break up with you and explain that you were too good for them, blah blah blah. Most of the time, it's just their way of softening the blow when they already want to break away from something they no longer want.

Believe your brilliant friends and their theories. Since you're pretty, sexy and you have a wonderful personality (as proven by a lot of people except me), many men may consider you as some trophy they can flaunt to their friends. Sadly, there is a huge possibility that some of the scums you were involved with just wanted to know if they could win you over and include you in their list of victims.

> The absence of a boyfriend doesn't necessarily mean that life is useless

What you can do is to be patient. Don't jump in on just any guy who passes by, just because you're desperate and you think that a boyfriend will solve all of your problems. Going for just anyone may not make you single anymore, but it doesn't necessarily assure you a great guy and a fulfilling relationship. Don't rush it. You'll just increase your chances of getting more jerks. Don't be involved with just anyone for the sake of being with someone. Enjoy the moment. Go scuba diving or sell *halo-halo*.

A pretty and sexy girl (with matching wonderful personality) like you can and will attract all kinds of men—bad and good, yucky and yummy. Even if you feel as if all you've been getting is a seemingly unfair share of losers and users, better ones will definitely come along. And you better be prepared for that.

MARK

You must try to have a pragmatic perspective on the status of your love life so it doesn't affect you as strongly as it does, which should not be the case.

Boyfriends come and go. If you happen to find one, then good. If you stay together happily for quite some time, then better. If you break up soon after the relationship started, then that's sad but not tragic.

After all, staying in a relationship that seems to be going nowhere but downhill is even sadder, not to mention stupid. If you don't happen to find a nice cute guy to put up with for quite some time, then just relax and be thankful that at least, you're not having extra problems that attached boys and girls encounter every day—mainly, the problem of putting up with strange irrational partners. And if you are surrounded by admirers but you can't stomach the idea of dating any of them, then thank your lucky stars because there are girls out there who will kill to be in your privileged place.

My point is this: As astrology expert Jonathan Cainer has said, there are two distinctly different ends in a car—the fancy front end, and the back, where black air comes out—and you just have to pick which end to look at. In your situation, if you look at your boyfriend-less state as a measure of your inadequacy, then you're simply focusing too much on the importance of being with someone—anyone—and ignoring other important things about yourself that should make you feel good.

Listen to what your friends tell you. Their assurance and encouragement, while these can only be their way of making you feel better, can teach you a few things about appreciating what you have. Get off the self-pity wagon and focus on the good stuff in your life. You can call that denial or delusion but, at least, it doesn't make you whine unnecessarily.

SEP

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This Holy Week, Prokids Premium Diapers treats travellers with its FREE diaper changing services in select Petron Stations in North and South Luzon. Plus, you get FREEBIES when you bring Prokids Premium wrappers at specified redemption booths below.

Promo Period:
April 16, 17, 19 & 20, 2003

MECHANICS:

1. Consumers may join by simply collecting points found in every Prokids Premium packaging. Points per packaging are as follows:

PROKIDS PREMIUM PACKAGING	LABEL POINTS
Mini Packs / by 4's	¼ point
Big Pack	1 point
Value Pack	2 points

2. Prizes with their corresponding required points are as follows:

ITEMS	Points
Prokids Car Sunshade	4 points
Baby Floats	2 points

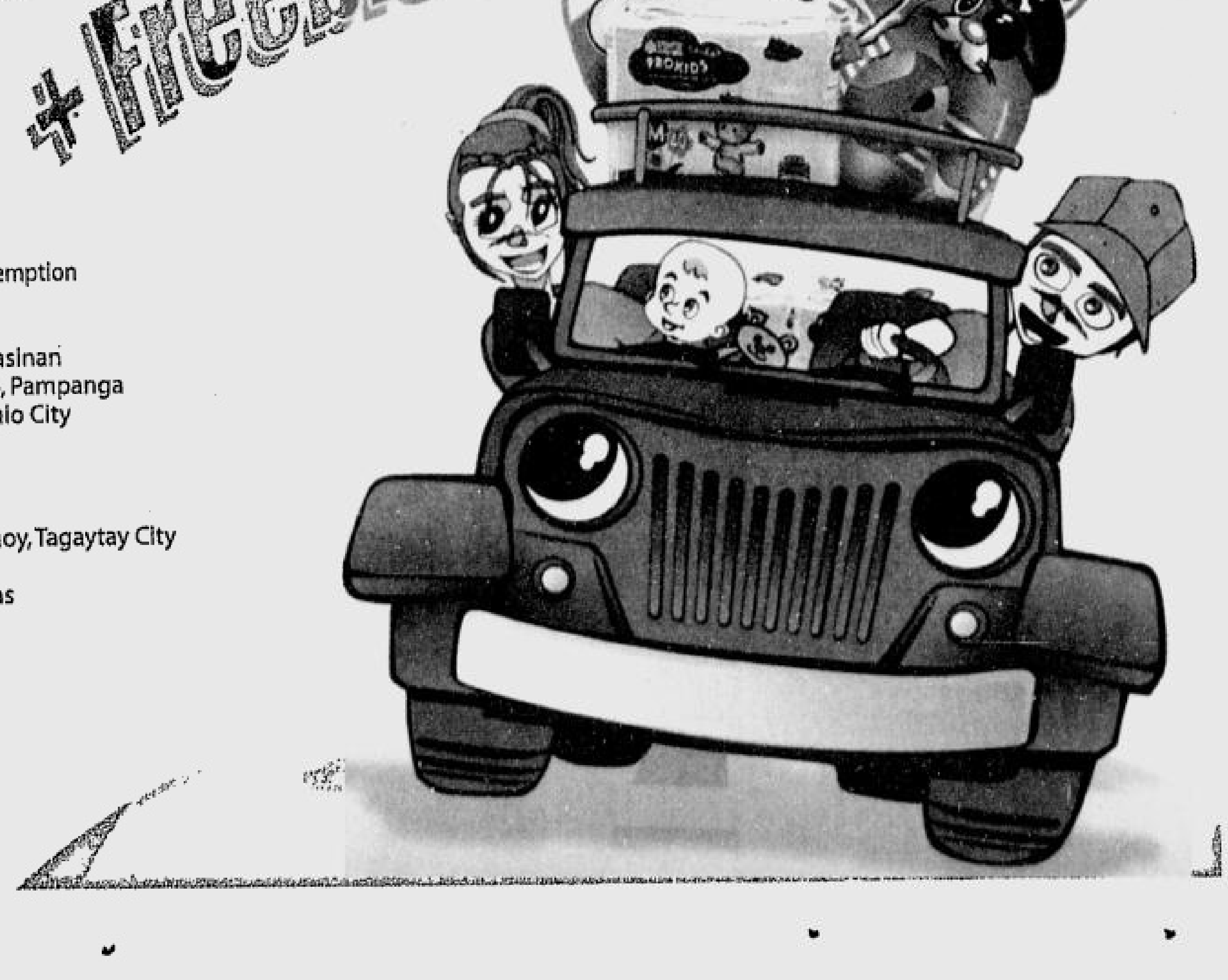
3. Present the required Prokids Premium wrapper/label points and exchange at the following redemption booths at Petron Service Stations in North and South Luzon:

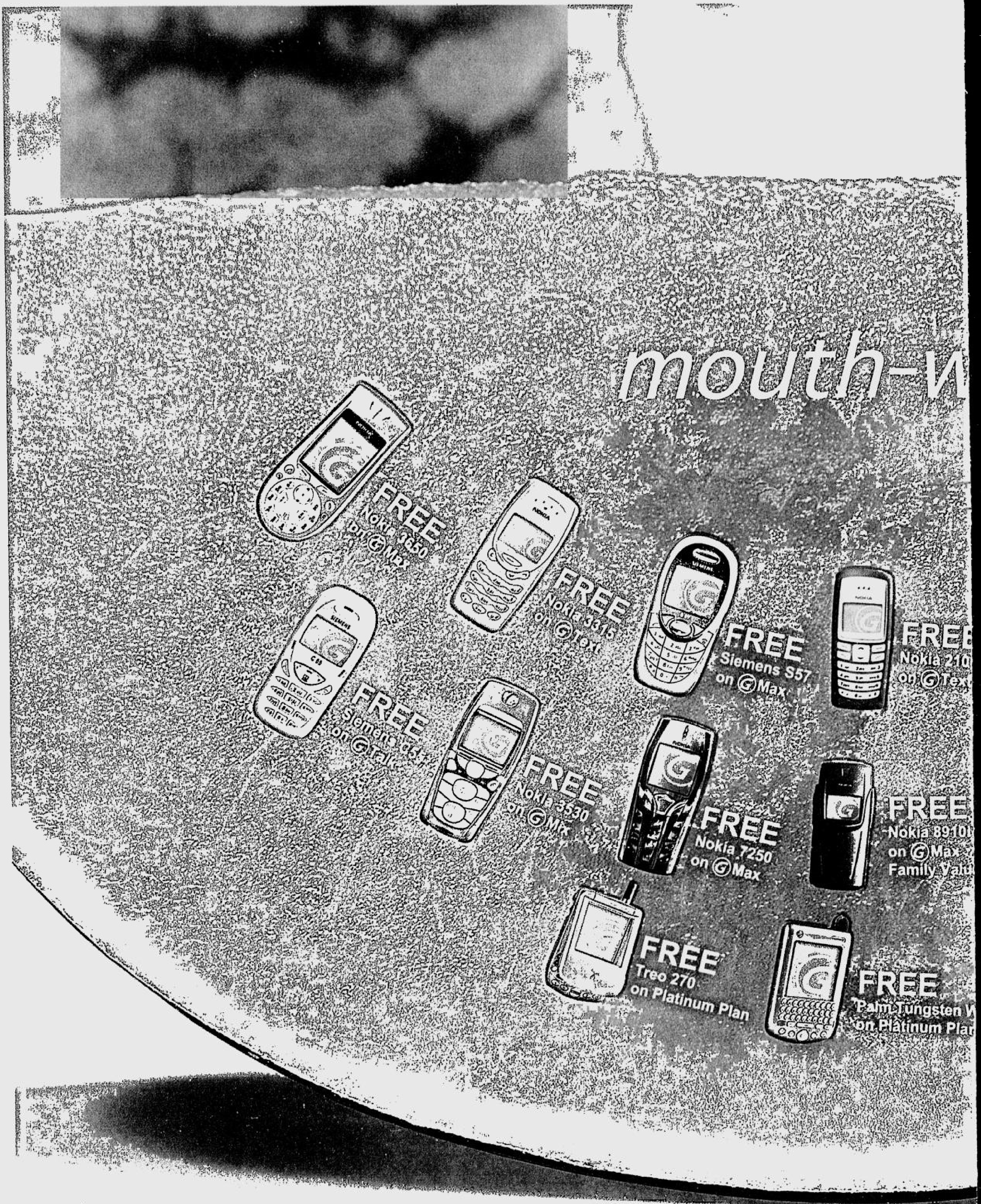
North Luzon
- PEC-1, North Luzon Tollway, Marilao Bulacan
- PEC-2, North Luzon Tollway, Bocaue Bulacan
- McArthur Hi-way, Brgy San Miguel, Tarlac
- McArthur Hi-way, Brgy San Rafael, Tarlac
- McArthur Hi-way, Binalonan, Pangasinan
- McArthur Hi-way, Pozzorubio, Pangasinan
- Gapan-Olangapo Rd., San Fernando, Pampanga
- Marcos Hi-way cor Kisad Road, Baguio City
- Harrison Road, Baguio City

South Luzon
- PEC-3, South Luzon Tollway, San Pedro, Laguna
- Governor Drive, Carmona, Cavite
- Aguinaldo Highway, Panapaan, Bacoor Cavite
- Maharlika Hi-way, Tagaytay City, Cavite
- Aguinaldo Highway Mahabang Kahoy, Tagaytay City
- Real, Calamba, Laguna
- National Hi-way, Sto Tomas Batangas
- Tambo, Lipa City, Batangas

4. Consumers may join as many times as they want.
5. Prizes are not convertible to CASH.
6. For more information, visit our website at www.evei.com.ph

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 1392 Series of 2003




mouth-w
FREE Nokia 3650 on Ⓖ Max
FREE Nokia 3315 on Ⓖ Text
FREE Siemens S57 on Ⓖ Max
FREE Nokia 210 on Ⓖ Tex
FREE Siemens C45 on Ⓖ Talk
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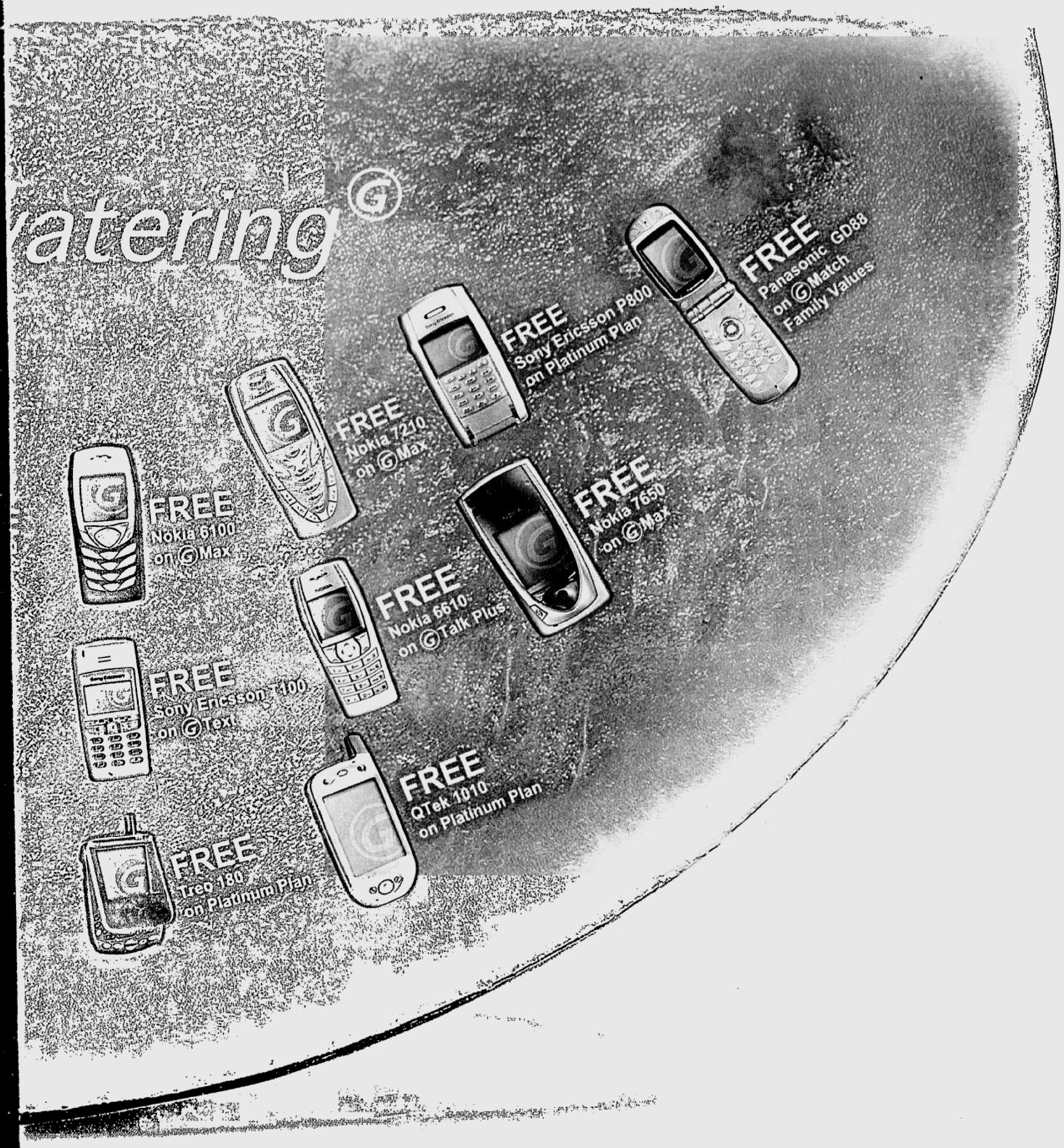
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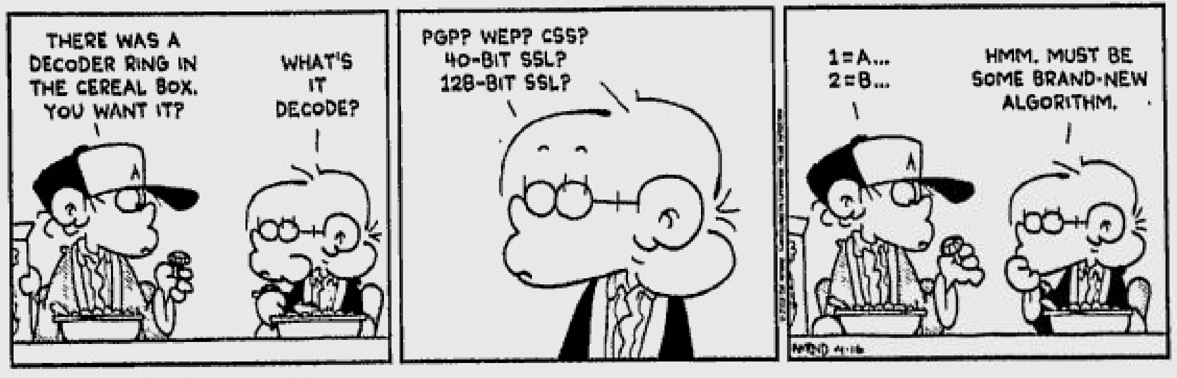
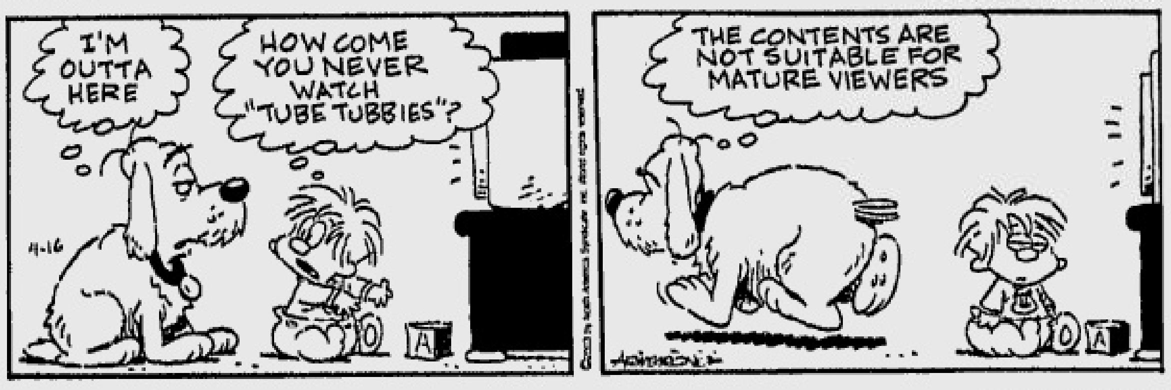
BY BILL AMEND


THERE WAS A DECODER RING IN THE CEREAL BOX. YOU WANT IT?
WHAT'S IT DECODE?
PGP? WEP? CSS? 40-BIT SSL? 128-BIT SSL?
1=A... 2=B...
HMM. MUST BE SOME BRAND-NEW ALGORITHM.
AMEND 4-16

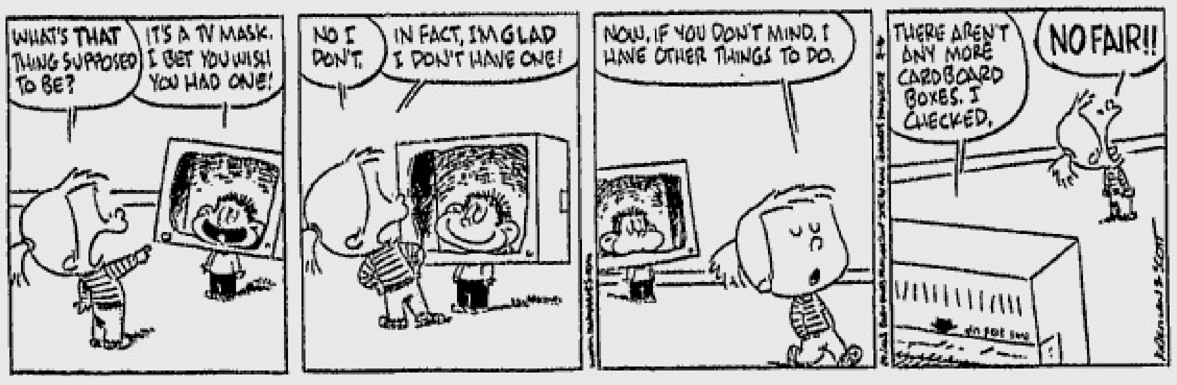
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I'M OUTTA HERE
HOW COME YOU NEVER WATCH "TUBE TUBBIES"?
4-16
THE CONTENTS ARE NOT SUITABLE FOR MATURE VIEWERS
A
A

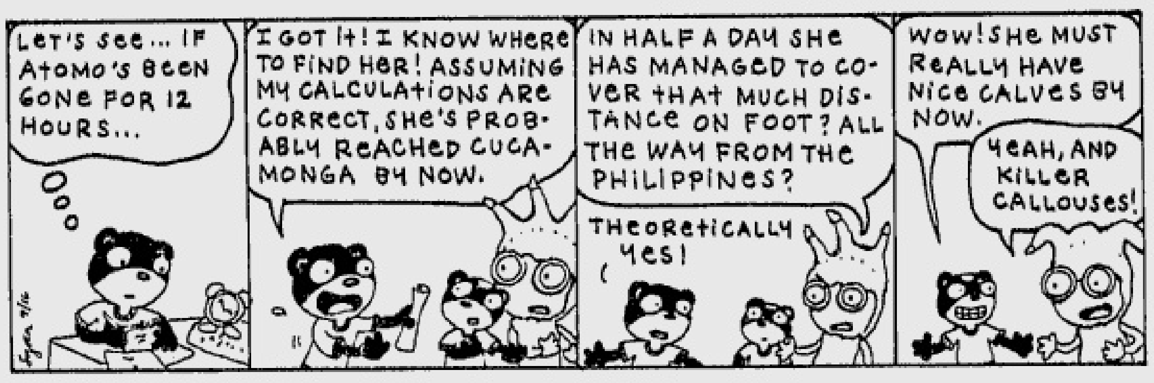
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT'S THAT THING SUPPOSED TO BE?
IT'S A TV MASK. I BET YOU WISH YOU HAD ONE!
NO I DON'T.
IN FACT, I'M GLAD I DON'T HAVE ONE!
NOW, IF YOU DON'T MIND, I HAVE OTHER THINGS TO DO.
THERE AREN'T ANY MORE CARDBOARD BOXES. I CHECKED.
NO FAIR!!

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


LET'S SEE... IF ATOMO'S BEEN GONE FOR 12 HOURS...
I GOT IT! I KNOW WHERE TO FIND HER! ASSUMING MY CALCULATIONS ARE CORRECT, SHE'S PROBABLY REACHED CUCAMONGA BY NOW.
IN HALF A DAY SHE HAS MANAGED TO COVER THAT MUCH DISTANCE ON FOOT? ALL THE WAY FROM THE PHILIPPINES?
THEORETICALLY YES!
WOW! SHE MUST REALLY HAVE NICE CALVES BY NOW.
YEAH, AND KILLER CALLOUSES!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are strong-willed, earthy and in touch with your power. You care about animals as well as people. You are adventurous, and you demonstrate leadership qualities. This is why others always respect you. Philosophy, metaphysics and religion interest you. This year could be one of the luckiest years of your life!
Birthdate of: William Holden, actor; Karen Blixen, writer; Olivia Hussey, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Avoid arguments with bosses and VIPs today. Let's face it; you are practically looking for a fight. There's no maturity or benefit in this. Be patient.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): There is a saying that you can't fight city hall, and it's sometimes true. Not always, but sometimes. Today is one of those days when it is true.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): And older friend could be critical of you today. There might be a difference of opinion about shared property and joint holdings. Don't let this get you down.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Relations with authority figures are definitely not good today. You might think that others are holding you back now, but it is probably that you are holding yourself back.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Don't tackle people at work with your beliefs about a political or religious situation. This is not the day to do this. You will simply encounter opposition.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Serious discussions about sharing possessions with children, or possibly others, could take place today. If you can, avoid them. These discussions will resolve little, if anything.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Domestic conflict is unavoidable today if you decide to take a stand about something. You can still have your say in court, but do it another day.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Your energy is very intense today, as if you are doing a slow burn. You feel that no matter where you turn, you are blocked. Perhaps you should not try to go anywhere.

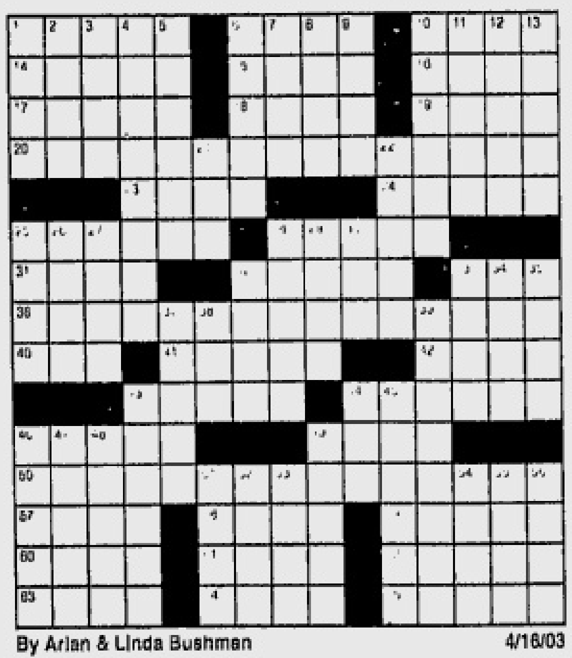
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Avoid romantic discussions with partners about money, gifts or possessions. You will not come to an agreement. Whether you are talking to children or lovers, it will be difficult to be skillful and fair.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You definitely want to break out of your velvet rut today. (Especially if it isn't velvet.) This is not the day to do so—barriers are in the way.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You might resent that circumstances require you to be different from who you are today. Nevertheless, you must admit you made this choice.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Disagreements about money or the spending of money are likely with a friend or group. Wait until another day to come to a vote on this. You'll be glad you did.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Arlan & Linda Bushman
Chicago, IL
4/16/03

ACROSS
1 Nestling
6 Ragout
10 British trunk
14 Gaseous element
15 Keystone site
16 Lowdown
17 Detached
18 Jaipur attire
19 Floor
20 Club
23 Oil of __
24 Aspirations
25 Hale and hearty
28 For a song
31 Tennis champ Lendl
32 Rub it in
33 German river
36 Club
40 Rockies grazer
41 Touches down
42 Taj Mahal location
43 Friday's ID
44 Like a baguette
46 City north of Salt Lake
49 Steer clear of
50 Club
57 Ages and ages and ages
58 Suggestive beginning?
59 Edge along
60 Litter's littlest
61 Squeeze in
62 River of Kashmir
63 Mimics
64 Coarse seaweed
65 Old World lizard

DOWN
1 Rugged cliff
2 Luminous ring
3 Image of worship
4 Perplex
5 Prepares to propose
6 Flippant
7 Pitfall
8 Buff color
9 Fluttering sound
10 Knight's neighbor
11 At hand
12 Helpful
13 Shadings
21 Hamlin pest
22 Idle talks
25 Houston campus
26 Racetrack shape
27 Rover's exclamation
28 Glasgow's river
29 Gardener's tools
30 Knack for music
32 Band of hoodlums
33 Work units
34 Trading center
35 Influence
37 Factory
38 Young man
39 Discouraging
43 Brutal characters
44 Fidel confederate
45 Putin's place
46 Soap or horse follower
47 Aggregation
48 Metaphysical poet
49 Trample
51 Second-rate writer
52 Angler's doodad
53 Space-saving abbr.
54 Icelandic literary work
55 Grad
56 City near Phoenix

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

H	I	C	K	S	■	L	A	L	A	■	H	A	S	P
U	N	H	I	P	■	E	X	E	S	■	A	N	N	E
G	R	E	T	A	■	A	L	A	S	■	S	T	O	P
H	E	S	■	C	A	S	E	H	I	S	T	O	R	Y
■	■	T	H	E	R	E	■	■	S	T	O	N	E	S
D	E	C	O	Y	S	■	A	S	I	A	■	■	■	■
A	T	O	M	■	O	H	N	O	■	S	A	B	O	R
D	O	L	E	■	N	A	V	A	L	■	R	O	V	E
A	N	D	R	E	■	L	I	K	E	■	O	X	E	N
■	■	■	■	D	E	L	I	■	A	S	S	O	R	T
T	R	A	G	I	C	■	■	B	R	I	E	F	■	■
B	A	R	R	E	L	A	L	O	N	G	■	F	U	R
I	D	E	A	■	A	L	E	S	■	N	O	I	S	E
R	I	N	D	■	I	S	I	S	■	A	R	C	E	D
D	O	T	E	■	R	O	S	Y	■	L	E	E	R	S

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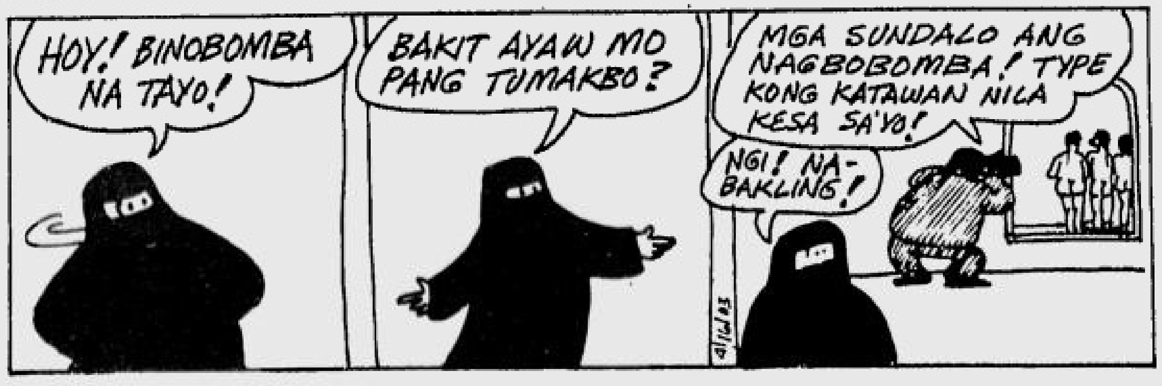
4/15/03

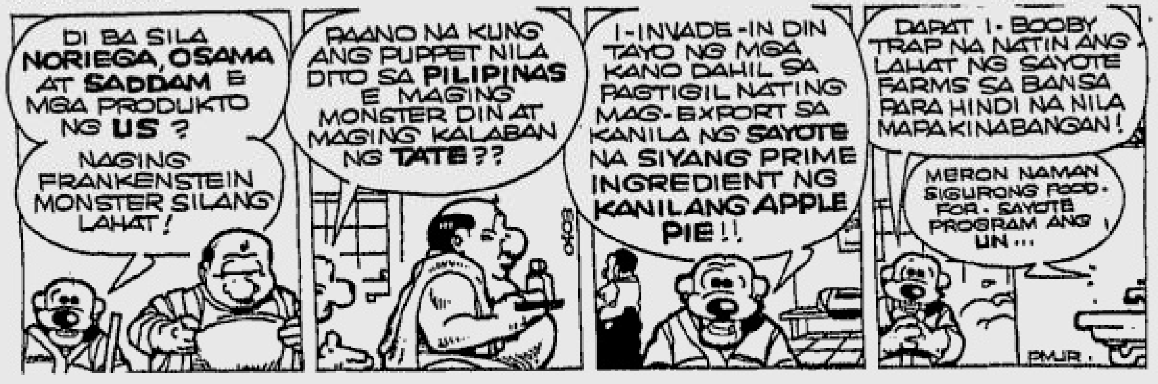
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


HOY! BINOBOMBA NA TAYO!
BAKIT AYAW MO PANG TUMAKBO?
MGA SUNDALO ANG NAGBOBOMBA! TYPE KONG KATAWAN NILA KESA SA'YO!
NGI! NA-BAKLING!
4/16/03

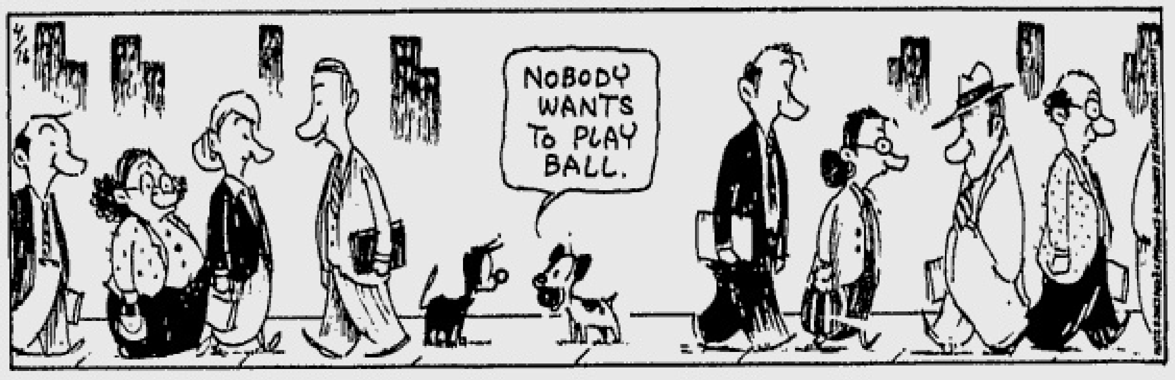
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


DI BA SILA NORIEGA, OSAMA AT SADDAM E MGA PRODUKTO NG US?
NAGING FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER SILANG LAHAT!
PAANO NA KUNG ANG PUPPET NILA DITO SA PILIPINAS E MAGING MONSTER DIN AT MAGING KALABAN NG TATE??
I-INVADE-IN DIN TAYO NG MGA KANO DAHIL SA PAGTIGIL NATING MAG-EXPORT SA KANILA NG SAYOTE NA SIYANG PRIME INGREDIENT NG KANILANG APPLE PIE!!
DAPAT I-BOOBY TRAP NA NATIN ANG LAHAT NG SAYOTE FARMS SA BANSA PARA HINDI NA NILA MAPAKINABANGAN!
MERON NAMAN SIGURONG FOOD-FOR-SAYOTE PROGRAM ANG UN...
PMJR.

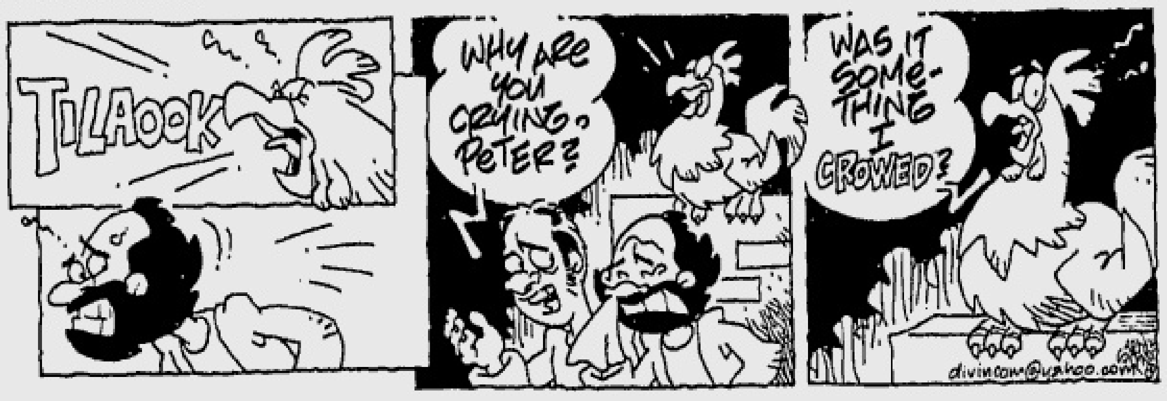
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


NOBODY WANTS TO PLAY BALL.

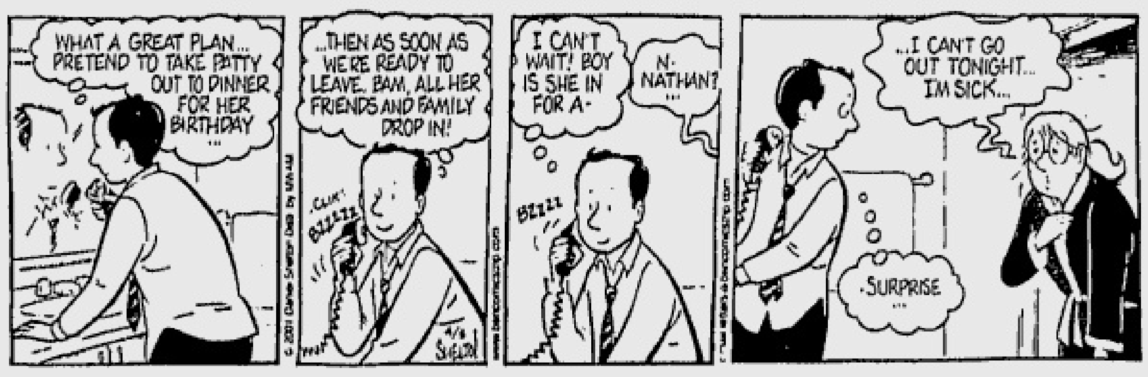
DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


TILAOOK
WHY ARE YOU CRYING, PETER?
WAS IT SOMETHING I CROWED?
divincom@yahoo.com

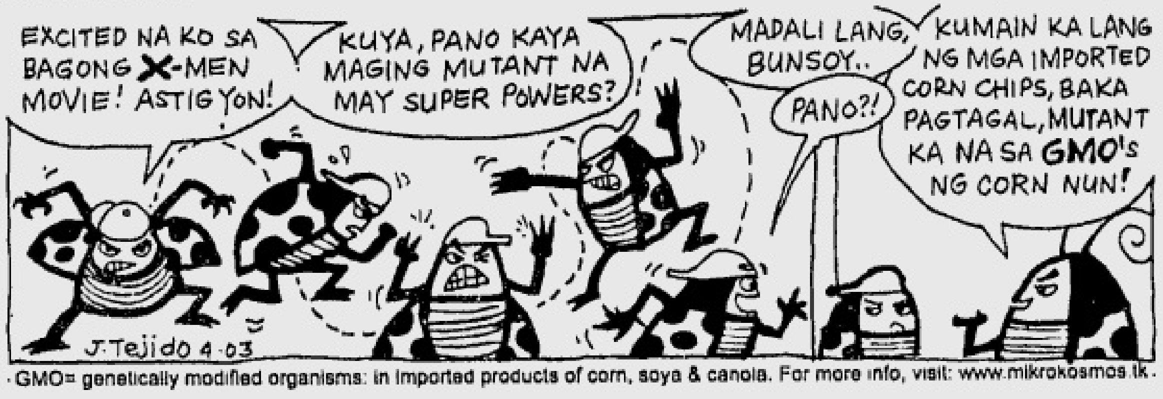
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


WHAT A GREAT PLAN... PRETEND TO TAKE PATTY OUT TO DINNER FOR HER BIRTHDAY ...
...THEN AS SOON AS WE'RE READY TO LEAVE, BAM, ALL HER FRIENDS AND FAMILY DROP IN!
CLIK! BZZZZZ
I CAN'T WAIT! BOY IS SHE IN FOR A-
BZZZZ
N-NATHAN? ...
...I CAN'T GO OUT TONIGHT... I'M SICK...
SURPRISE ...

MIKROKOSMOS

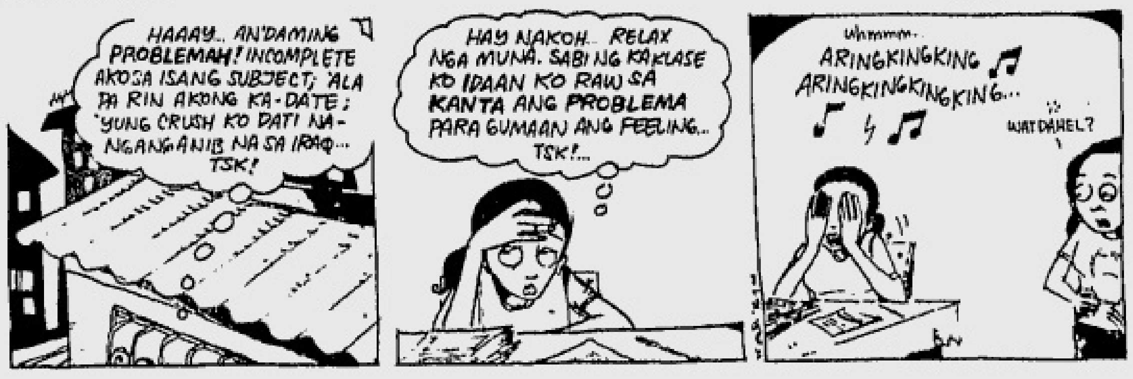
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


EXCITED NA KO SA BAGONG X-MEN MOVIE! ASTIG YON!
KUYA, PANO KAYA MAGING MUTANT NA MAY SUPER POWERS?
MADALI LANG, BUNSOY..
PANO?!
KUMAIN KA LANG NG MGA IMPORTED CORN CHIPS, BAKA PAGTAGAL, MUTANT KA NA SA GMO'S NG CORN NUN!
J. Tejido 4-03

· GMO= genetically modified organisms: in imported products of corn, soya & canola. For more info, visit: www.mikrokosmos.tk ·

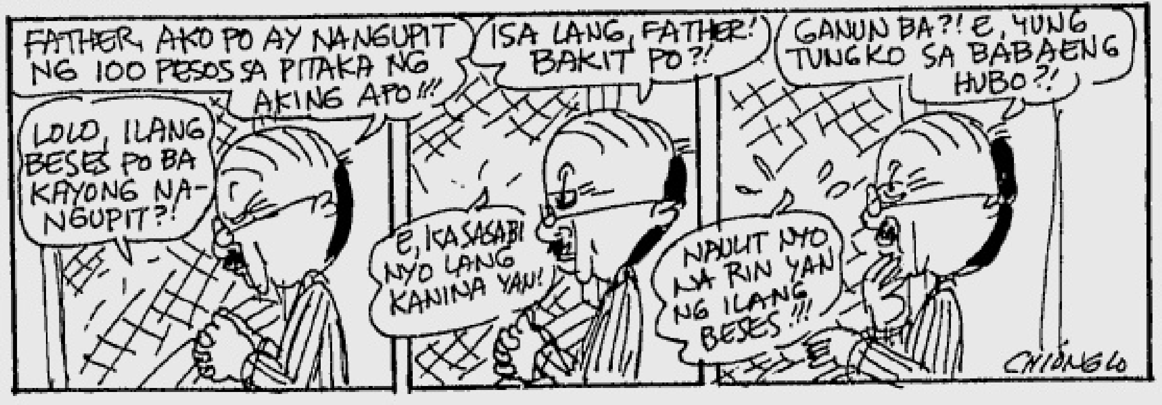
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


HAAAY.. AN'DAMING PROBLEMAH! INCOMPLETE AKO SA ISANG SUBJECT; 'ALA PA RIN AKONG KA-DATE; 'YUNG CRUSH KO DATI NANGANGANIB NA SA IRAQ... TSK!
HAY NAKOH.. RELAX NGA MUNA. SABI NG KAKLASE KO IDAAN KO RAW SA KANTA ANG PROBLEMA PARA GUMAAN ANG FEELING.. TSK!..
Uhmmm..
ARINGKINGKING ARINGKINGKINGKING...
WATDAHEL?

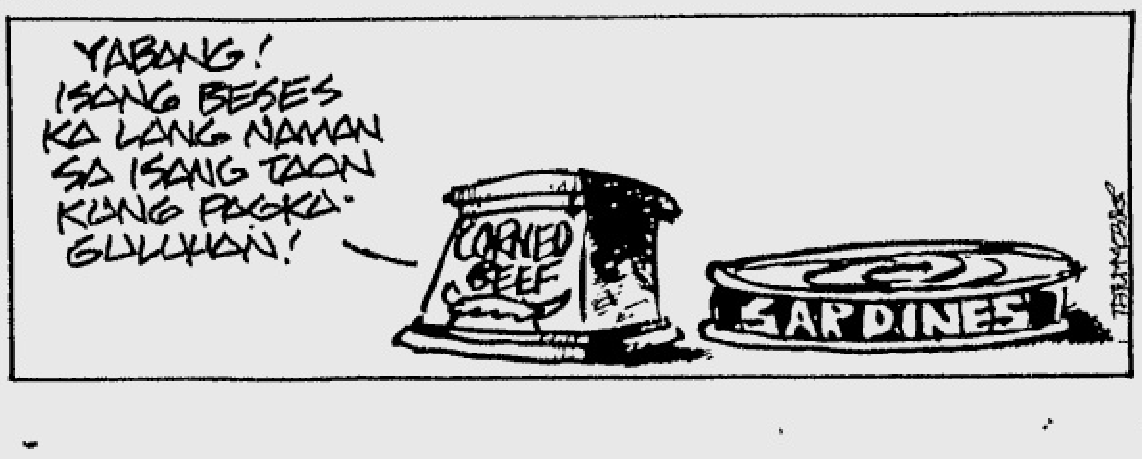
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


FATHER, AKO PO AY NANGUPIT NG 100 PESOS SA PITAKA NG AKING APO!!!
LOLO, ILANG BESES PO BA KAYONG NANGUPIT?!
ISA LANG, FATHER! BAKIT PO?!
E, IKASASABI NYO LANG KANINA YAN!
GANUN BA?! E, YUNG TUNGKO SA BABAENG HUBO?!
NAULIT NYO NA RIN YAN NG ILANG BESES!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

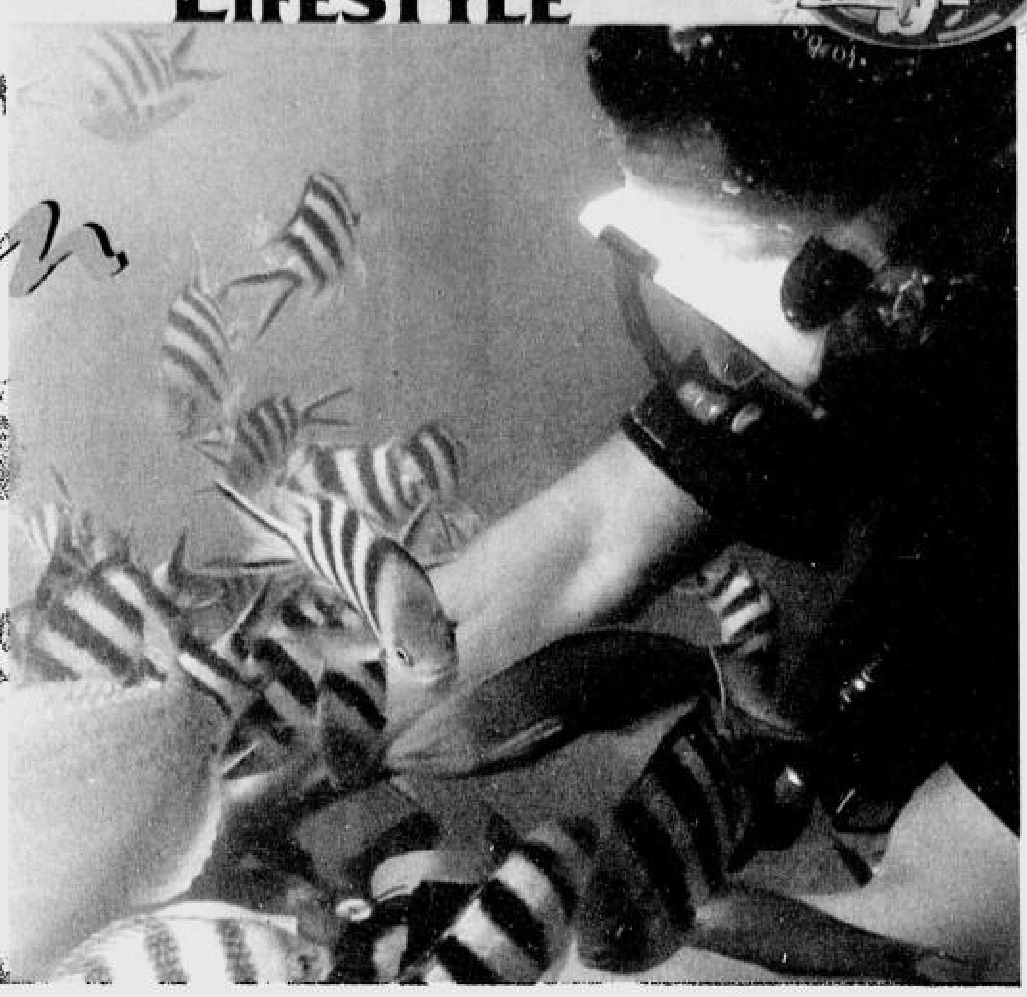
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


YABANG! ISANG BESES KA LANG NAMAN SA ISANG TAON KUNG PAGKA-GULUHAN!
CORNED BEEF
SARDINES

Conversion in Palawan

By Melissa Telan
2bU! Correspondent

The irresistible charm of Palawan turns a reluctant water babe into confirmed sea lover



HERE FISHY, FISHY. Palawan offers numerous diving spots that would delight both neophyte and experienced diver.
ALBERT LABRADOR

ALTHOUGH Palawan is known for its beaches and crystal-clear waters rich in marine resources, not being keen on water sports and activities, I was not excited to be going there.

But everything changed when I set foot on the province. One look at the sparkling blue-green waters and I knew I couldn't spend my time just staring at it.

Palawan's waters felt like nothing else. Since it was the dry season, the weather was perfect for sunbathing and the lukewarm water delightful and soothing to the skin. Swimming alongside colorful fishes in the translucent waters was an added treat.

But the best part was the place's serenity. At Dos Palmas, where we stayed, the beach was secluded and was almost like our private enclave.

Time seemed to pass quickly while in the water, and I was amazed at how soon night fell.

Snorkeling mishap

I would have been more than happy to just wade in shallow waters, but the Dos Palmas people who organized the trip, had other plans for us.

Leeds Trompeta, sales manager of Dos Palmas, laughingly dismissed my reservations about snorkeling. "Don't worry, it's very easy. Even kids can do it," Trompeta said.

Snorkeling for the first time was a strange and awkward experience. I was too preoccupied with breathing at first to fully appreciate the rich marine life below. But soon, I forgot about the breathing business and focused my attention on the multihued soft corals and other aquatic species underneath. It was spectacular!

But just when everything seemed okay, I absentmindedly inhaled air through my nose, forgetting that I should breathe through the snorkel. My mask wasn't tight enough so salty water got through my nose, gagging me. On reflex, I raised my head to get some air and struggled to remove the mask and mouthpiece.

"Blow! Blow!" the snorkeling instructor commanded, meaning I should blow water off my air passage instead of removing my mask and snorkel. His instructions worked, but snorkeling suddenly ceased being leisurely and became hard work.

GONE fishing at Sabang beach
MELISSA TELAN

Scuba Diving 101

Next on the agenda was introduction to diving. If I was worried about snorkeling, I was terrified of diving! The choking I experienced when snorkeling was still on my mind.

THE AUTHOR gazes at Palawan's inviting waters.

My paranoid mind came up with possible underwater disasters: drowning, bursting my lungs by rushing too fast to the surface or even getting chewed to pieces by gigantic man-eating sea creatures. But though terrified, I was also drawn to the idea of being able to breathe underwater, feeling weightless and swimming among the fishes. In the end, curiosity won over fear.

After a 15-minute orientation, we headed for Helen's Garden, a diving spot in Honda Bay perfect for beginners. My heart was pounding as I strapped on the buoyancy control device (BCD), a belt that can be inflated or deflated to control buoyancy, diving mask and the heavy compressed air tank.

"Don't worry. You won't feel its weight once you're in the water," the dive master said. As I placed the regulator in my mouth, he also reminded me to, "Breathe in and out slowly. Don't hyperventilate."

After a few minutes of practice on the surface, the dive master and I started our descent to 10 then 20 feet below.

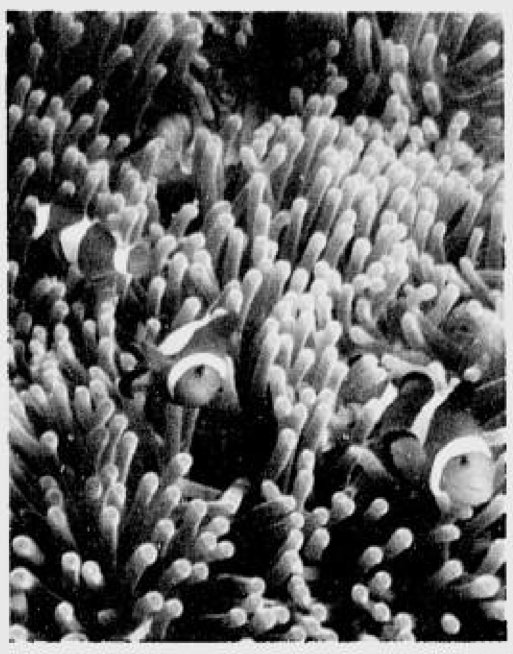
The feeling of sinking was both exhilarating and nerve-racking. Although it felt invigorating to be underwater without holding my breath, I couldn't help but be conscious of my breathing. Equalizing the pressure in my ear also proved to be tricky.

But soon, my fear was replaced by wonder. My breathing became relaxed and, for the first time, I saw how beautiful it was down there! Various sea creatures that I used to see only on television and magazines, swam before my amazed eyes.

My dive master signaled for me to kneel on the ocean floor and touch the soft corals and giant clams. I tried to brush my fingers against the tropical fishes, which came in all colors of the rainbow, but they were too fast for me.

By the time the dive was over, I was already thinking about being back among the fishes and corals again.

E-mail the author at melissatelan@yahoo.com



MESMERIZING coral reef at Helen's Garden
ALBERT LABRADOR

Journal of a first-time Palawan visitor

THE AUTHOR poses against the picturesque Dos Palmas Arreceffi Island Resort.

Day 1

10 a.m. Minutes before landing at Puerto Princesa, I looked outside the plane's window. The scenery was a feast for the eyes.

12 nn. We were welcomed to picturesque Dos Palmas by the beating of gongs and a smiling resort crew headed by Vikkie Castro.

2:30 p.m. It was a good thing that the resort offered graded snorkeling masks for the vision-impaired. I was able to remove my contact lenses and enjoyed the activity better.

4 p.m. We spent the rest of the day submerged in water, where we witnessed multicolored fishes and a beautiful sunset.

8 p.m. I enjoyed the powdery sand on my toes while savoring Japanese food fare.

Day 2

7:30 a.m. The 45-minute speed boat ride was an experience in itself. The spray of cool water was refreshing, while Mark was delighted with the fish leaping out of the water from time to time.

10:30 a.m. The beach in Sabang was classic Palawan—unspoiled and deserted—but we had little time to appreciate it because we had to begin our trek to the Monkey trail, which will take us to the Underground River.

12 nn. I savored the flora and fauna found at the Monkey trail.

Day 3

9 a.m. After breakfast, we took a speedboat to Helen's Garden to have our first diving experience.

11 p.m. Mark passed up the banana boat ride while I gave it a try. It was a wild, bumpy ride!

1 p.m. I tried mangrove kayaking and rowed in tandem kayaks with Zo Aguila of Cosmo.

Melissa Telan

THE GROUP takes an exhausting 4.7 kilometer trek via the Monkey Trail to the Underground River.
MELISSA TELAN

KAYAKING by the beach
MARK SABLAN

Tan in a bottle

Lora Gabol

I HAVE horrid memories of the beach as a kid. Though I was truly addicted to the sand and sea, my tortured, sun-burnt, peeling back never seemed to share the passion. Being a tomboyish 13-year-old, I was more concerned with playing beach volleyball and collecting seashells than baking to get a gorgeous glow.

But the little vain voice inside me still rallied against being a lobster for weeks. I have the kind of skin that turns red before it turns golden, and peels before I even get the chance to be officially tanned. I was just about ready to live with pasty skin and kiss my beach-goddess fantasies goodbye when the ever-resourceful beauty industry came up with an ingenious idea—self-tanners.

"Fake" tans are fast becoming the next best thing to an honest-to-goodness bronze glow from direct sun exposure. Women, and yes, even men, are rushing to beauty counters in search of the perfect tan in a bottle—the smartest summer move beach bums can make, considering that the sun's rays are more lethal than ever. Thanks to intensive research and a lot of trial-and-error formulations, you can now achieve smooth, even surfer-girl skin without premature wrinkles and post-sunbathing breakouts.

Popular brands have come out with formulations that are practically fool-proof, reducing the risk of orange-tinged complexions and uneven streaking. There are, however, a few guidelines that will ensure a trauma-free session with a self-tanner. Read on and learn.

Exfoliate. Any tan worshipper worth her weight in bikinis knows that this should always be the first step to any tanning regimen. Exfoliating with a mild scrub, bath mitts, or good old loofah gets rid of any dry patches (laden with dead skin) that may absorb more product than needed, resulting in an uneven tan. Scrubbing yourself smooth also helps a tan last by allowing the tanner to work on a new layer of skin.

Protect. Your eyebrows, hairline, elbows, knees and heels, that is. Self-tanners can discolor eyebrows and hair. Try to avoid these areas or apply a thin layer of petroleum jelly on them. Knees, elbows, heels and body areas with creases absorb too much tanning product. Wipe these areas with tissue or soft cloth after full-body application. And don't forget to wash your hands thoroughly! Orange palms and stained nails are dead giveaways you've gone fake.

Choose your product wisely. Never use the same product on your face and body unless the product specifically says so. Remember that body skin is a lot thicker and less sensitive than facial skin. Gel and spray formulas are best for normal-to-oily skin, while creams, lotions and tanning milks work well with normal-to-dry skin. Always do a patch test 24 hours before applying the product all over. And use a product that has sun protection for great results, even under the sun.

Apply the right amount. Don't scrimp or get slather-crazy the first time you try a self-tanner. Three to four pea-sized amounts for your face and a chestnut-sized dollop for larger areas like arms and legs are enough for a light tan. Also, make sure you've got all bases covered. Spray tanners are great for your back and other hard-to-reach nooks and crannies. Leave the product on until it dries completely. Wait at least 30 minutes before dressing up.

Be patient. You won't turn into a St. Tropez native after one application. Do your self-tanning as gradually as you would under the sun. Apply every night until you get the shade you want, but don't expect that you can trade in your mestiza milky-whiteness for a bronze glow instantly.

If you wish to keep your tan longer than the usual one-week period, use a pH-balanced cleanser on your face and body and go easy on the exfoliating. Applying a tanner every three to four days also keeps color intensity at its glowing best.

Here are some of the products that are flying off the shelves as you read. Hurry to the mall and grab your own bottle before they run out.

Philosophy The Healthy Tan. Celeb-favorite Philosophy believes that no sun-phobic should be left pale this summer. Its self-tanner's rich texture relaxes and keeps skin soft and smooth long after you turn tan. I'd recommend it for those already with a slight tan, though, to deepen and lend a healthy glow to their natural coloring.

The Body Shop's Fake It! All-around beauty supplier, The Body Shop has all skin tones in mind with varying tan intensities. Choose the best shade for you (light, medium, dark).

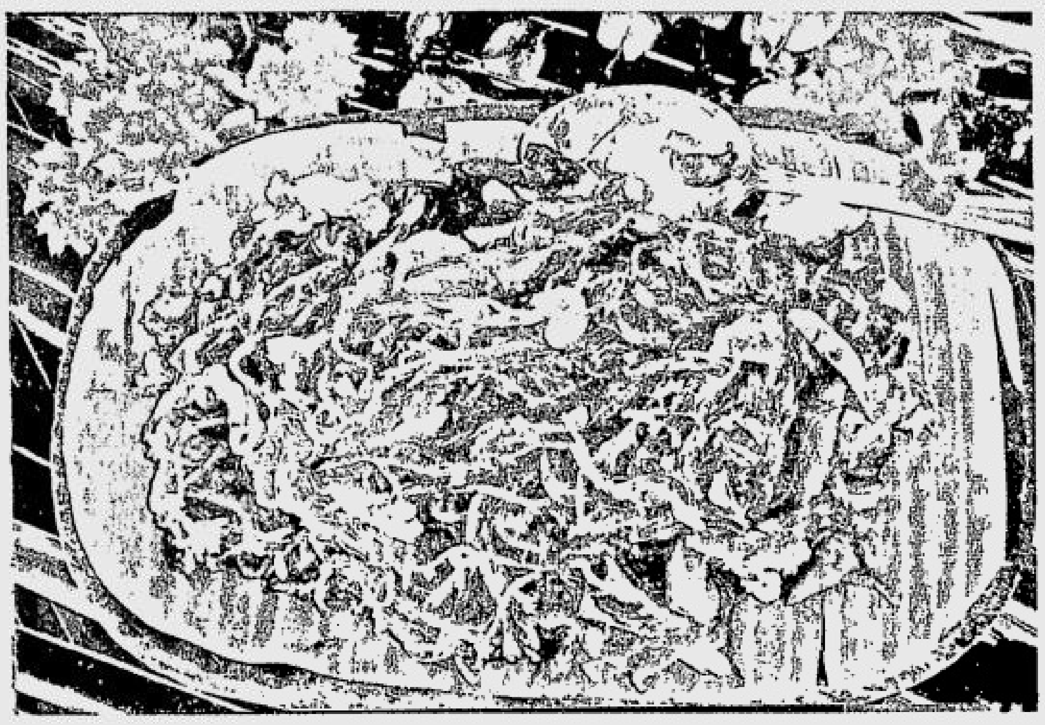
Hawaiian Tropic Dark Self-tanning Lotion. Does the job, but less luxurious (and a lot cheaper) than other products in the market. Iffy with some skin tones (responded well with some complexions, did a so-so job with others), this product does not appeal to the senses (has "medicinal" smell) as much as its high-end counterparts.

Clarins Self-tanning Range. These products are the best in my book! Specializing in just about any skin tone and type, one of the products in their range will surely suit you to a T. Friendly sales representatives at counters help answer your tanning questions, but if you want it straight from the experts, book an appointment at Clarins Institute at Rustan's. Beach bums on the go will benefit from fuss-free sprays, and SPF addicts will be delighted to hear that most of their products are armed with ample protection. Stock up now.

Clarins at Rustan's; Hawaiian Tropic at PCX, Essenses and other H&B stores; Philosophy at Beauty Bar.

E-mail the author at pdi_vanityfare@hotmail.com

Palate pleasers and adventures in Palawan



SUCCULENT squid straight from the sea (above) and oodles of Korean noodles (left).
PHOTOS BY MELISSA TELAN

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

THE PALAWAN food scene is a unique dining experience. Since the sea is just a glance away, sea cuisine is almost always present on plates, but crustaceans and scaly species aren't the only grub around.

When it comes to chow, Palawan greatly boasts of abundance, variety, freshness, impressive twists and an ambience that makes you want to savor each and every bite.

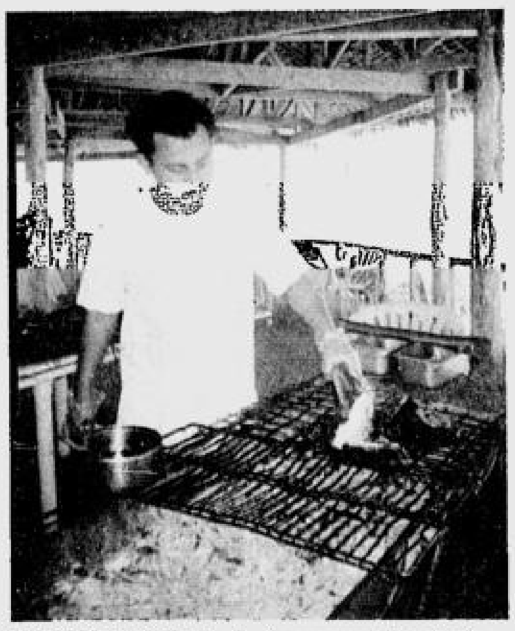
Dos Palmas proudly offers all of these, and more. To start with, the island resort's restaurant is a haven for the senses. Kara-e-nan, which is Cuyunin (the local dialect) for dining, makes sure that nature is near. The interiors are a visual treat and the food is palate-pleasing.

And since Dos Palmas doesn't want one to memorize the exact location of each and every furniture and décor in the resto, guests are shipped (more like boat-ridden) to different destinations for a change of scenario.

For example, the resort has three floating huts sprinkled somewhere in the sea, where guests could enjoy any meal, and perhaps snorkel or scuba dive to burn off the extra calories.

Another property of the Dos Palmas Arreceffi Island Resort is the Isla Puting Buhangin, where families can unfold a picnic blanket and pig out. Yuppies can even hold corporate meetings or parties in the island.

Those who are simply lazy to hop on a boat and speed off to an island or a hut can always have a romantic dinner by the seashore or eagerly partake of the buffet near the swimming pool.



INSTANT EATS. A chef prepares the day's catch right before you. PHOTO BY MARK SABLAN

Boat rides aren't even exempted from the yummy-tummy treats. On our way to witness the bats' flight from the island, we were offered a sea of champagne and trays of hors d' oeuvres, the yummiest of which were the barbecued mussels with papaya cubes. Yum.

Overflowing

Our tables overflowed with the sea's bounty: lobsters and king crabs on chili sauce, shrimp *sinigang* soup, every species of fish. Apart from scales and scales of seafood, other meats were present in various sauces and spices. There were grilled *liempo* and spareribs, sticks and sticks of barbecues.

Sweet treats teemed, too. Juices of fresh fruits, fresh fruit crepes, fruit concoctions inside coconuts, and even more fresh fruits.

Buffets are also a big hit. The one we had near the pool offered us endless bowls of chapchae, plates of kimchi, sashimi and salads. There was even Mongolian barbecue, much to the delight of many.

But the greatest thing about the food scene in Dos Palmas is not the variety of food or the twists that they give to old dishes. It's not even how wonderfully pleasant to the senses the whole atmosphere of Palawan is. Honestly, it's the simple fact that after all the pigging out, you know you have tons of calorie-burning and adrenaline-pumping activities waiting for you.

E-mail the author at katotino@yahoo.com

At Dos Palmas, the gustatory scene is nature tripping in itself

getting the right 'pasalubong'

"When I cross-stitch, I bloom."
Lucy Torres-Gomez
Sofa by Ethan Allen
Threads and Designs by DMC.
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CREATIVE WORLD
DMC
Dare your Mind to Create.

BUYING *pasalubong* is something Filipinos have turned into an art. Whether they're visiting relatives in the States or spending a week off from work in Boracay, they have to find time to buy souvenirs for family and friends.

In Palawan, *kasuy* and dried fish abound, but there are other things to buy. Here are three souvenir shops in Palawan where you are likely to find something for everyone.

Mini-Forest Souvenir Shop

One of the many shops in the town of Sabang, it is reputedly the largest and has a wide variety of Palawan *pasalubong*. Aside from lamps, sarongs, shirts and the best-selling key chains and fashion accessories, the shop also sells wooden figures, musical instruments and dreamcatcher, a hanging rounded decor consisting of web-like patterns.

The rainslides (a.k.a. rainsticks or rainmakers) that produce sounds similar to falling rain are a hot buy at P130-350.

Tiangge Ding

Located inside the café/resto/gallery Kamarikutan, Tiangge Ding offers a pretty small selection of undeniably ethnic table toppers, home décor plus beaded necklaces and bracelets. Really thick notebooks with carved wooden or hand-painted covers are also available. They may be a bit pricey but given their quality are worth every hard-earned peso.

What makes the shop very special is that artists craft each intricate piece, making every creation a genuine piece of art.

Palawan has something for every kith and kin

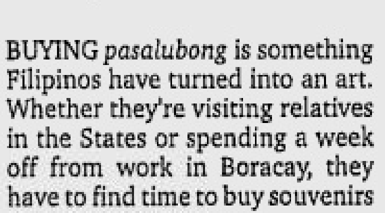
Tabu-an

Dos Palmas' gift shop comes from a Tagbanuan word, which means a traditional market activity involving the barter of goods by local folks. At Tabu-an, Dos Palmas guests could get necessities they forgot to bring or buy stuff to take home to family and friends.

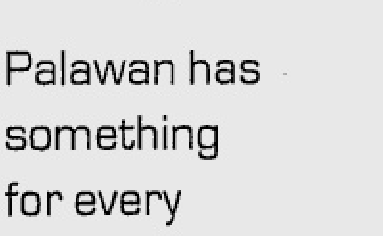
Aside from the usual keychains, postcards and beaded accessories (all bracelets and necklaces sell for P50); Tabu-an also has picture frames (P160-520); candles, stuffed toys, incense sticks and holders, rainslides and all sorts of bags (from P205-405). The shop even carries the Dos Palmas line of resort wear including tops, bottoms, shawls and sarongs, headgear and footwear.

Niño Mark M. Sablan

E-mail the author at katotino@yahoo.com



A SHOWER OF RAINSTICKS. Mini-Forest Souvenir Shop's bestseller. PHOTOS BY MARK SABLAN



BAG IT UP. A variety of bags from Tabu-an .

For feedback, text us at **(0919)880-33-54** or email us at **pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph**

LIFESTYLE

Boracay bliss relived

Text and photos by Tammy David
2bU! Correspondent

The island appeals even to those who do not care much for sun, sand and sea

CHER looks out at the azure waters of Boracay.

ALTHOUGH not enamored with the sun (I put sunblock every day), I couldn't pass up an opportunity to return to Boracay and the beach I fell in love with before.

I still remember my first trip with the 2bU! gang in 2001 with the never-ending food trips, shopping, stargazing and bonding. I remember going around in jeans (and socks!) and eating till I almost turned purple. The only time I swam was when I got thrown off from the jet ski.

But after that trip, I never set foot on any other beach. It was Boracay or Bust for me.

I was afraid, though, that this trip wouldn't be as much fun as my first but a part of me wanted to show Cher (Cheryl Tiu) the things I enjoyed during the last trip.

To-do and to-go-to

I made a check list of things to do and where to go. At the top of the list was Hey Jude! Pizzas. Then there were the Piña Coladas from, Cocomangas, Banana mango shake, beads from Talipapa, massage by the beach and, of course, the sunset.

HIGHLIGHT OF THE TRIP. The author relishes the pizzas of Hey Jude.

When it was time to leave, we were more worried about our wardrobe than the plane ride and the piles of homework on hold.

Like the first trip, I forgot all my worries as soon as I saw the crystal-clear waters and powdery white sand. I brought my video camera and I was filming the water like an idiot, zooming in and out.

Although we were tired and we wanted to take naps when we got to the Pink Patio resort (thanks to Vikkie Castro), we had to get through our list. We had a massage first and I tried the hydra massage, which included aromatherapy, and I fell asleep.

It was still the middle of the afternoon, but instead of scuba diving we decided to explore the island by ourselves.

As it was the first week of March, we had the island almost to ourselves. We stood by the shore and just relished the beauty of the island. The fresh air, the sound of the waves and the cool sand were just perfect.

Bargain hunting

Cher wanted to buy beads from the stalls near "D'Mall" but I told her to wait and see the Talipapa.

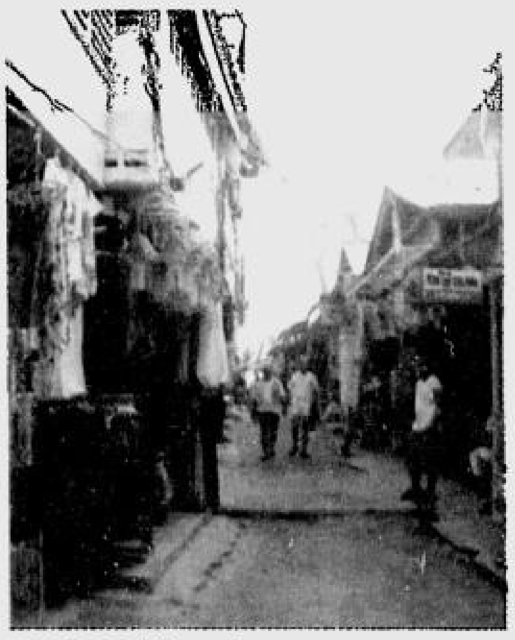
I went nuts going shopping with Cher, a sucker for bargains.

She took her time, and the sun was about to set when we finished. We took a break from shopping and went to the shore to watch the sunset, something I'd looked forward to:

I videotaped the sunset and took pictures since it's one of those priceless moments I could look back to.

Hungry after shopping, we headed for Hey Jude! and ordered two pizzas. But that didn't keep us from enjoying the delicious dinner Skippy of Pink Patio prepared for us guests.

BORACAY /E2



TALIPAPA (alleyway)

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CELEBRATE EASTER AT SM

Easter Workshops
Mix work with a lot of play during the Easter Holiday!
Easter Bunny Ears Making
April 14,15,16,19
10:30 am - 12 nn
All Malls
Easter Drawing & Coloring
April 14,15,16,19
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm
All Malls
(except SM Megamall and SM City Bicutan on April 15 and 16)
Easter Egg Painting
April 14,15,16,19
3:00 pm - 7:00 pm
All Malls
(except SM Megamall and SM City Bicutan on April 15 and 16)

Easter Play
Watch young performers from Teatro Tomasino re-live the meaning of Easter
Venue : SM MEGAMALL
SM CITY NORTH EDSA
SM CITY BICUTAN
SM SOUTHMALL
Date : April 19
Time : 12:30 pm - 1:15 pm

Giant Easter Egg Photo Opportunity
Pose beside a giant egg and show your best bunny smile !
Venue : All Malls (Entertainment Area)
Date : April 14,15,16,19,20

Easter Party
Paint your Easter eggs with wildest colors and look your best in the Easter costume of your own creation
Easter Egg Painting
Venue : All Malls
Date : April 20
10:00 am onwards
Easter Bunny Costume Contest
Venue : All Malls
(except SM City Cebu, SM City Iloilo, SM City Davao, SM City Cagayan De Oro)
Date : April 20
2:00 pm onwards
(Registration from 10:00 am to 1:30 pm)
(Judging starts at 4:00pm)

Special thanks to Yumwich Cracker Sandwich mentos

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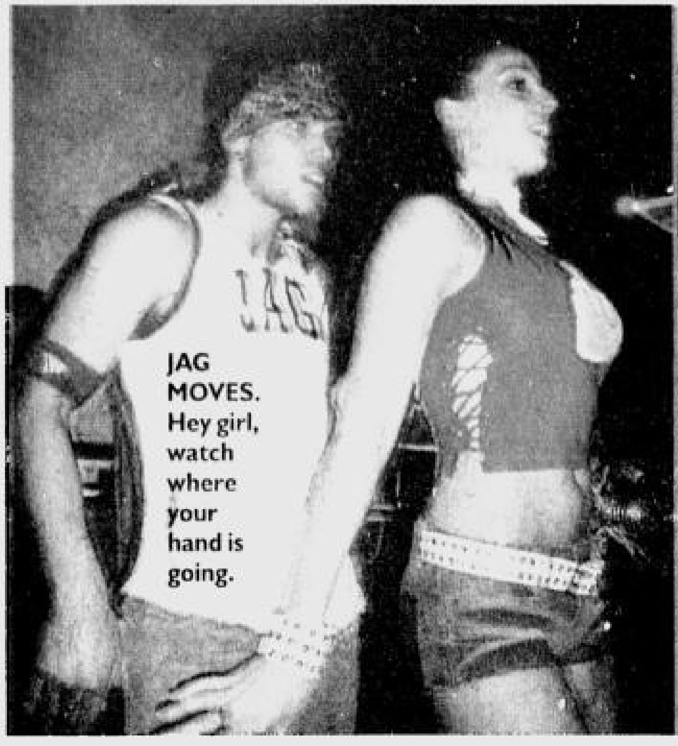
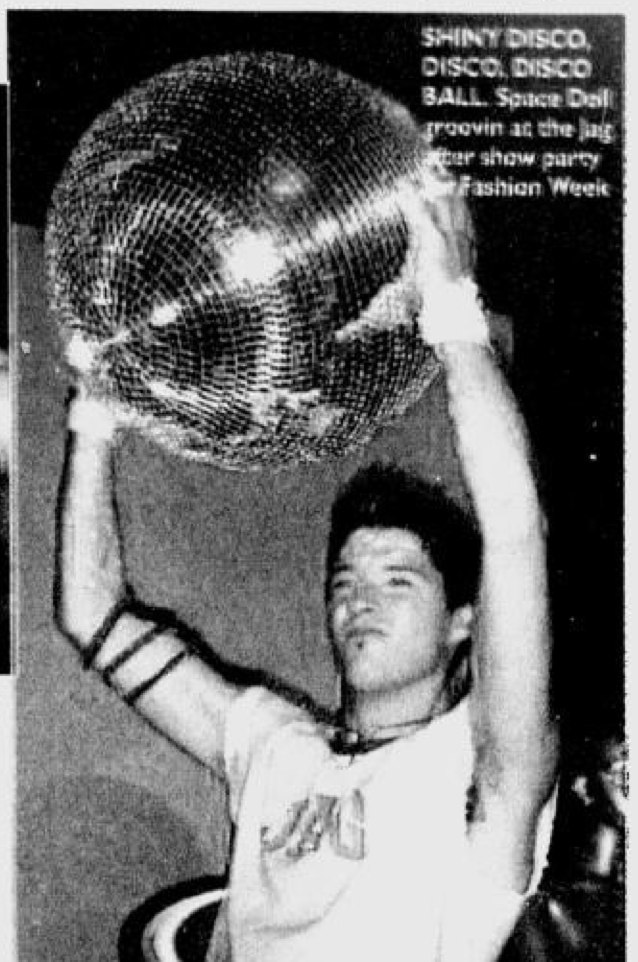
PHOTOS BY TIM YAP


JAG MOVES. Hey girl, watch where your hand is going.

THE "I -got-kicked-out-of-the church-choir" rebel dance routine

BUSTA MOVE. Behind every tough guy is lotsa tender love n' care.

DANCE GUERILLA. San Fo fabulous at 6750


SHINY DISCO, DISCO, DISCO BALL. Space Doll groovin at the Jag after show party Fashion Week

The fast and the furious

Tim Yap

THE PRE-HOLY Week indulgence was at its peak last weekend. It was as if nobody wanted to abstain, much less fast. At least this was true of nocturnal partyphiles all over the city.

The past week saw the blonde DJ domination (with three blond DJs playing, to be exact) and the closing of a club that revolutionized Manila's urban landscape. Here's the party fashion breakdown.

Friday saw Jag flaunt its denim wares with the wave of the magic wand by dandy designer-stylist **Ignacio Loyola**. Just when you thought there was nothing more you could do with the obi, here came Ignacio with stylized Japanimation belts fit for a futuristic Kurosawa flick.

That "Jag-ged" night, Manila witnessed the musical genius of DJ **Lisa Loud**, the most popular blonde DJ chick on the block. As she wowed the Fashion Week audience who flocked to the Hard Rock Café (it was the Jag aftershow party by Big Fish and Gen-TXT), the Space Dolls (go-go guys and dolls from Oz) sexily strutted their stuff.

I couldn't force myself to dance at Hard Rock, so I hopped over to Dreambar at 6750, but I missed the sample set of DJ **Dawn of Sound**, who played at Wherelse the whole Saturday night. So I found myself dancing with Metro's **Freida Dario, Jenni Epperson, Erich Edralin** and **Miko Valenzuela** (both still high from the success of the Absolut Manila party at the CCP, pictures of which appear on this page).

Models and music

Saturday saw the city gather at The Loft, Rockwell's latest event space for hip-and-happening shebangs. This time it was the Studio 23 and Axe affair, with **Soulstice** on top billing and Scrambled **Edge Pamute** and **Mike Constantino** playing their Novalounge tunes.

Cal Carrie's also launched its dotcom site, with over 50 models joining in the parade. Backstage was a veritable showcase of girls with long locks, mannequins with über character, guys comparing abs and biceps, all killing time as they waited for their turn to romp the ramp.

After the Cal Carrie's roll call, DJ **Gina Rene**, the other half of the duo Soulstice, grabbed the mike and began an impromptu song-spiel. On the spot, she just sang her heart out as the audience listened intently.

After a while, she said in jest, "Do I look stupid? How come everybody's just watching and not dancing? I want you guys to get up here and let go!" That's Pinoys for you—sometimes we just like to watch.

"Britney Spears or Madonna—I'm not. What I'm giving you is something like a rhyme, but it's all mine." Later as DJ **Mai Lwun** played funky and futuristic soul, the Rockwell set just flew. Tune of the night was "Billy Jean," house version, which is playing in my head until now. Music, just like fashion, is on a retro mood, it seems.

Techno tribal

Wherelse was on a roll with DJ Dawn of Sound. The San Fo DJ act was pumping the minute she set foot on the DJ turntable area with resident **Mon Maramba**.

The dancefloor was high with kinetic energy; the VIP rooms were filled with fashion, with society and model types flirting with each other as they downed shots of Jaegermeister (I hope I spelled it right).

Funky Techno Tribe spruced up the club into a white maze of fabric for a night of unadulterated fun. Wherelse master **Marcel Crespo** made sure the vibe was kickin'.

After the lady DJ's set, **Kevin Ruiz** (who has been Manila's favorite—playing from the Temple bar opening to **KC Concepcion**'s debut party) took it further as he played his set, peaking the "Later at Wherelse" after-hours set.

Before sunrise, I made sure to pass by Pravda for its last night. DJs **Manolet Dario, David Jacob** and **Raji Mata** were taking turns, and the crowd danced like there was no tomorrow! It was sad to see Pravda close its doors, since it had been doing so well for a relatively long time. It was a fresh departure from the franchised fun that the other mall-based bars and clubs offered.

Paolo Trillo, our beloved comrade, decided to shut operations due to internal problems. Through it all, the success of the club depended on Paolo's tenacity and vision. With his knack for making people feel at home, he made Pravda the hipster's favorite hotspot, from its Wednesday R&B nights up to its weekend house beats. To Paolo, keep the revolution alive!

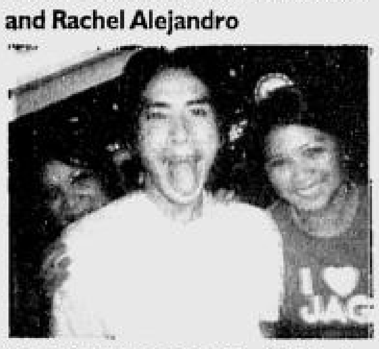
Whether at home or out of town, enjoy this week of rest and reflection, dear partyphiles.

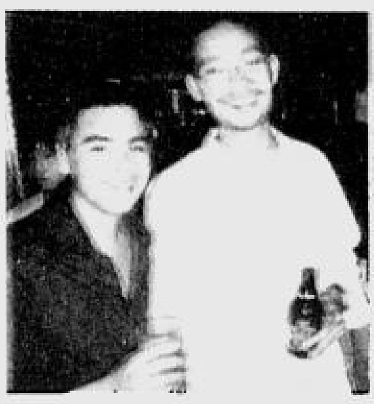
ABSOLUT DIVAS. Angelo Villanueva and Leah Caringal

ABSOLUT TOAST. Tootie Crisologo and Venice Nieto

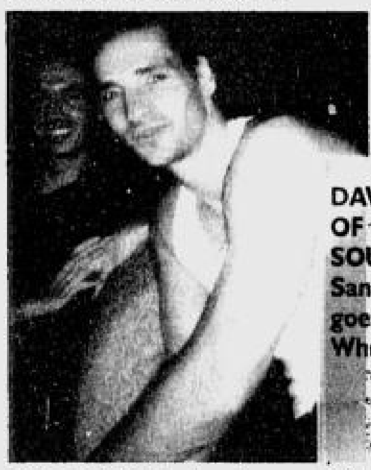
CULTURAL SMILES. Artists Paolo Basa and Kaz Castillo

RENT PARTY. Lee Robin Salazar and Rachel Alejandro

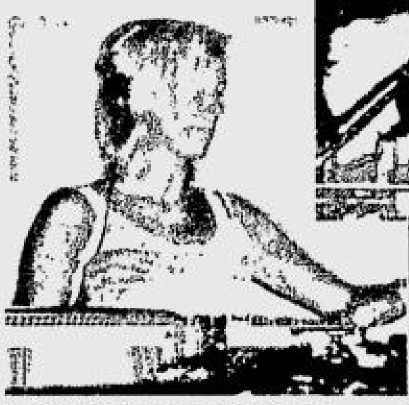

ROCKSTAR TRIO. Lizza Nakpil, Rico Blanco and Veng Taningco


PARTY FLAVOR. JM Rodriguez and Han Phoa of Malaysia

ABSOLUT ATI-ATIHAN. Jaime del Prado (above) and Vina Basas (left) attest to the Manila party spirit.


UNDER WEAR. Bernie and Todd of Cal Carrie's

DAWN OF SOUND. San Fun goes to Wherelse


WITHIN AN EARSHOT. DJ Lisa Loud spinning around

GENTXT JAG. Space Doll gyration with Jill of Jag (left), TXT mates Em Lingao, Ericka Fife and Danby Henares (above) at Hard Rock

MOOD OF THE MOMENT. Freida Dario is pro-peace.

LENNY AND PEEWEE. Cal Carrie's Sol Glass and Albert Adrales in party hardy mode

Boracay bliss relived

From page E1

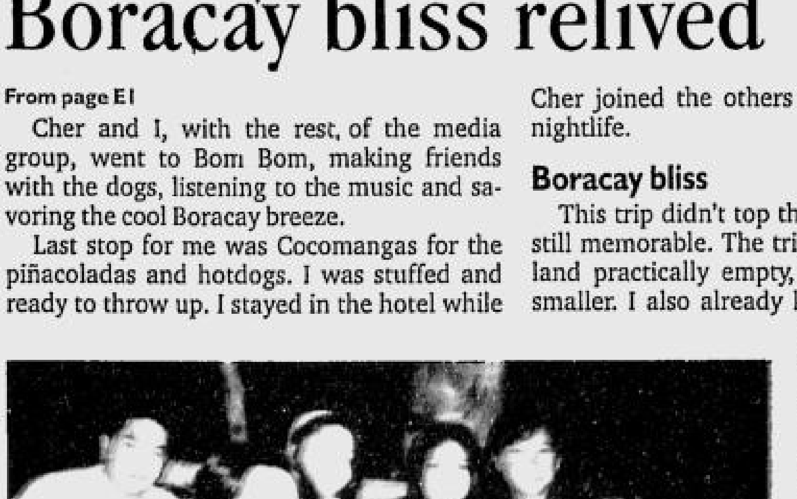
Cher and I, with the rest, of the media group, went to Bom Bom, making friends with the dogs, listening to the music and savoring the cool Boracay breeze.

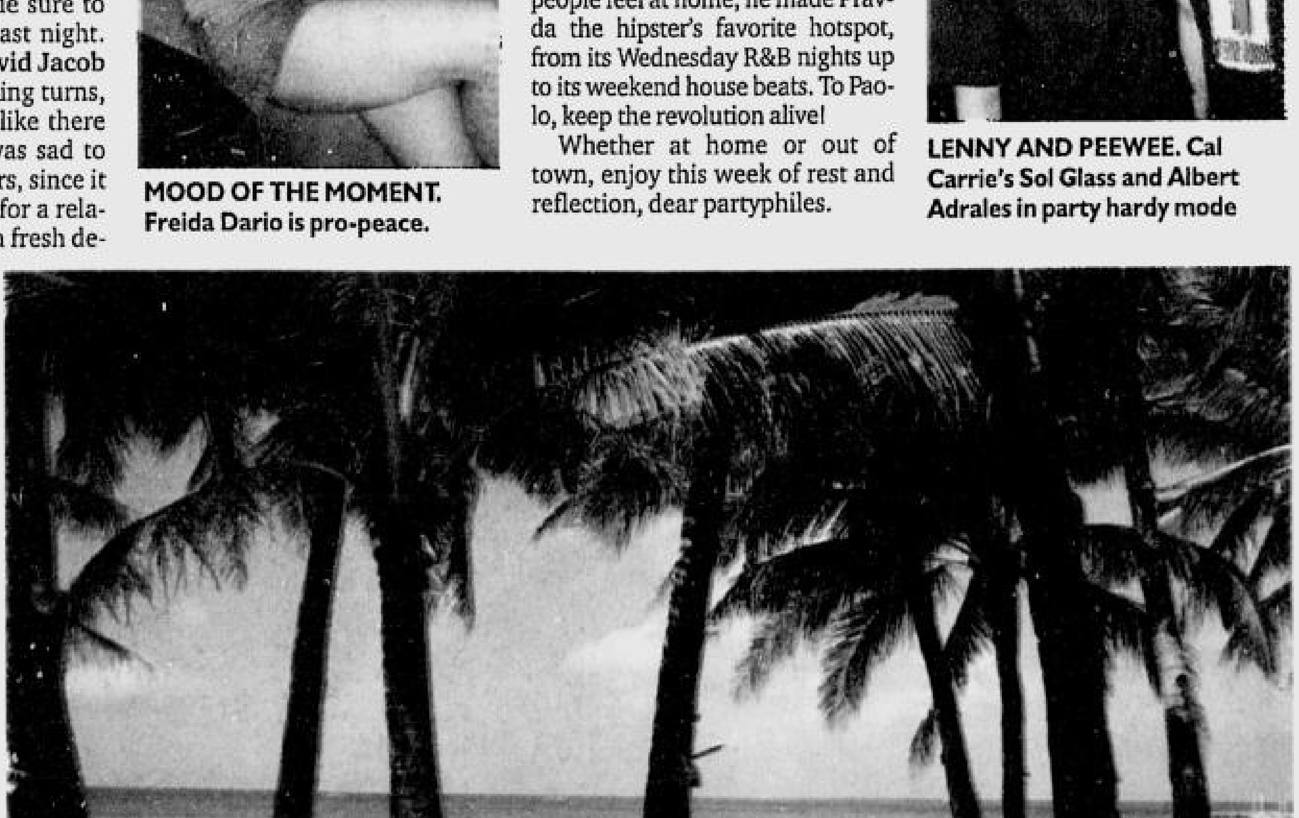
Last stop for me was Cocomangas for the piñacoladas and hotdogs. I was stuffed and ready to throw up. I stayed in the hotel while Cher joined the others in checking out the nightlife.

Boracay bliss

This trip didn't top the first one but it was still memorable. The trip was shorter, the island practically empty, and our group was smaller. I also already knew what to expect (except for that incident when our plane had engine trouble and would not take off when we were leaving Boracay).

Although I am still primarily anti-beach, Boracay will always be special even if I go there every month. It isn't just about getting drunk, swimming or strutting in bikinis. Boracay's appeal will make a beach bum out of a sea-phobic person like I used to be.


HANGING out at Bom Bom with the gang. (from left) Randy, Alex, the author, Cher, Maggie and Zo


LOVELY palm trees sway against the aquamarine waters.

Boracay *for the first time*

Despite her aversion to sun and water, the author finds that this island is, indeed, paradise

By Cheryl Tiu
2bU! Correspondent

"YOU mean the entire Boracay is filled with sand?" I cried incredulously when I asked my friends to help me pack for my weekend trip.

"Yup," my friends Minnie and Rachel snickered as they handed me a list of things to bring. "It's an island." The list included a bikini, shorts, slippers and sunblock.

My biggest dilemma was what to wear since I couldn't take my usual get-up of big pants and boots with me. I hate the sun and water, and I don't swim. I don't even own a swimsuit!

As soon as we got to Caticlan, I hurried to the bathroom to change my business attire. The moment our boat left the Caticlan port for Boracay, all I could do was gape at the sandy white shores and crystal-clear waters.

When we got to the Pink Patio resort, their PR officer, Vikkie Castro, insisted we take our lunch right away. There we met the rest of the press: Zo and Maggie from Cosmo, Alex from FHM and Randy from Manila Bulletin.

Right after lunch, Tammy and I dumped our stuff in our room. We were amused with our bathroom, which had a mini-garden. Since it was separated from the rest of the room by only a full-length glass window, we would often joke about how a pervert roommate could just roll up the blinds and the rest of the world would have a great view. "Talk about being one with nature," Tammy and I would always snicker. Every time one of us had to use the bathroom, we would yell out, "I'm going in... don't roll up the blinds!"

Good massage

The massage we had felt so good. We were relieved of all the stress from tests and term papers. If the Boracay trip was a weekend getaway, the massage was a rejuvenation of the senses.

I then went into the Alpha Capsule, where the machine was still a novelty in the Philippines. It was like being encased in a personal sauna bath while getting a massage and listening to relaxing music. I peacefully drifted off into dreamland.

Shopping spree

Since Tammy and I didn't do any water-related activities, we decided to take the tricycle to the *talipapa* for a bit of shopping. We only bought a couple of cheap necklaces and bracelets for our family and friends. We then took the tricycle back to Hey Jude because Tammy had been raving nonstop about its divine pizzas. We then rushed back to Pink Patio for our sit-down dinner by the beautiful garden. I was full so I only had Banana-Mango shake, a Pink Patio specialty.

At around 10:30 p.m., Tammy, Maggie, Zo, Randy, Alex and I met up at Bom-bom for drinks and reggae music dished out by some local bands. Tammy and I then walked over to the other end of the strip to Cocomangas because she kept telling me I had to try its Piña Coladas.

I later met Alex and Zo at Summer Place, which serves a strong Bailey's shake, well worth its P100 price. On our way back to the resort, we stopped by for some hotdogs and *isaw* (chicken intestines).

We groggily left the island at 8 a.m. the next day. Just as I was saying goodbye to Boracay and how much I was going to miss the place, our airplane wouldn't start. I looked out the window and saw that oil was leaking out of the left wing and the crew was manually trying to turn the plane's propellers. Oh, my goodness!

I clutched my rosary and I thought I was about to pass out when the airline's crew told all the passengers to vacate the plane. Tammy and I rang our dads immediately and of course they panicked. They told us to ride another plane. So Tammy and I bolted into the L300 for the two-hour ride to Kalibo, where we tried our luck as chance passengers. We both prayed to St. Josemaria Escriva like crazy since we had school the next day.

Unfortunately, when we got to Kalibo, after the bumpy and uncomfortable two-hour van ride, we found out that no passenger had backed out of the flight and that the next flight would still be noon of the next day (Monday). We had no choice but to return to Boracay to spend another night there. So just after reeling from the migraine that the two-hour van ride gave us, we took an L300 for another two-hour van ride back to Caticlan, to make it in time for the last boat ride to Boracay. (We found out that our plane from Caticlan was able to fly later and landed safely in Manila.)

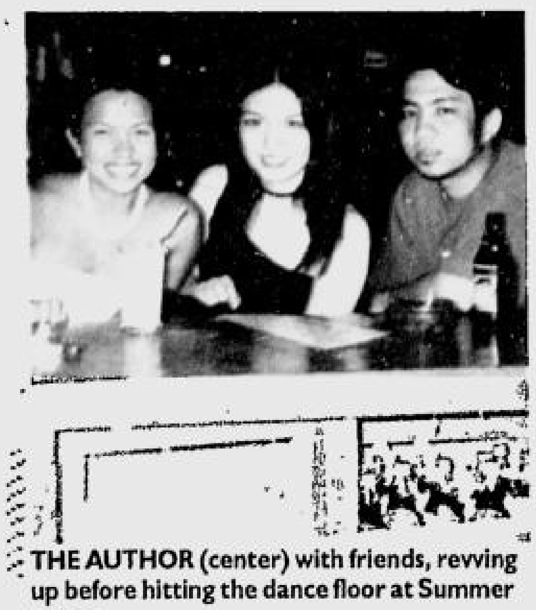
Pink Patio graciously took us back in and apologized for any inconvenience. Vikki told us, though, that what Tammy and I had done—randomly jumping into the next L300—was very dangerous and we admitted that it was fear that drove us to act on impulse. We all had dinner at Gasthof, which made all the hullabaloo we had gone through all in one day all worth it.

Finally, Monday morning came, and it was time to say my real goodbye to Boracay. I realized that I had first come into the island as a beach-loathing city girl. I never liked the sun, sand and nature; and I didn't swim, snorkel, jet-ski or involve myself in any water-related activities. But after 2½ days in Boracay, I had become a convert. I came to the beach without a swimsuit; I didn't do the things I didn't want to do. But I had an amazing time. I remember telling my classmates to explain to our teachers my critical situation of having been stranded. I was incredibly upset that I was going to miss class but later on I realized that it was a blessing in disguise because it left me with another extra day in an island that I would never have imagined to be paradise.

E-mail the author at chloe_dominique@yahoo.com

BEAUTIFUL Boracay sunset

BUYING beads for *pasalubong*



THE AUTHOR (center) with friends, revving up before hitting the dance floor at Summer Palace.

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Peach Mango Pie
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- All Buko Piña Pies or
- 3 Peach Mango Pies and 3 Buko Piña Pies

Pasalubungan ng tamis ang 'yong mga mahal sa buhay
Jollibee Pies-to-go now available in 3's and 6's.

Favorite Boracay moments

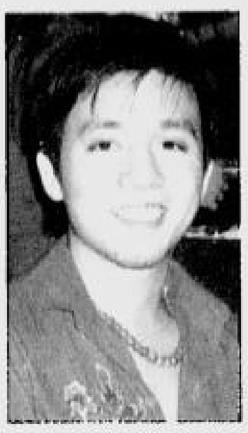
By Cheryl Tiu and Tammy David
2bU! Correspondents

BORACAY has always been synonymous to fun in the sun, regardless of the time of year. And because it has always brought wonderful memories to almost everyone, 2bU! looks back and asks, "What's your favorite Boracay memory?"

My first Boracay fling! I met this really cute *balikbayan* from New York, then we met again in Manila. We shared a romantic kiss before he left the next day for the United States.—**Noelle Aguas, 25**

Getting sand bites or is it... getting bitten by sand mites! It made me look like I had chicken pox!—**Caren Crisologo, 18, DLSU**

We went sailing, *yung tipong katamaran*. It was windy but it was nice. I fell asleep for a while and woke up to see the sun set. Then I got a henna tattoo. I got an allergic reaction and now it's kind of permanent.—**Robinda, 19, Manila**


AUDEE Villaraza

PAUL Dee

6 o' clock sunset martinis!—**Alex Escat, 18, International School Manila and commercial model**

Seeing the first sunrise of the new century with all my friends by the beach after surviving the 15 shots of Cocomangas.—**Brian Tanchanco, 19, De La Salle University**

My favorite Boracay moment was New Year 2002... staying up late with my friends until sunrise at a friend's beach loft then walking along the serene shores back to my hotel room.—**Steph Singson, 19**

"Under the guise of an org seminar, I hied off to Boracay with my boyfriend. Even the wrath of my parents after I got back was well worth the three days of tanning, hoarding board shorts and puka shells, and sleeping under the stars.—**Krystal, 21**

I have so many wonderful Boracay memories but the best was when we went to this almost deserted island and my friend got stung by a jellyfish. That was a riot!—**Randy Torrecampo, writer**

INA Vargas

ALIA Vargas

Boracay is a place of freedom. It's not what you remember which is good but what you do when you're there. Whatever happens in Boracay stays in Boracay.—**Jason Grigg, 18, FUBU Image model**

During my first boat ride to Boracay, I noticed that water just suddenly changed from murky to crystal blue. Everyone's been telling me about it and it was really nice to finally see it for myself.—**Audee Villaraza, 24**

Watching my family and friends plus myself, and not caring because I can never get enough of the sand and the blissful view!—**Minnie Torres, 20, Ateneo de Manila University**

MINNIE Torres

My favorite Boracay moment would probably have to be Independence Day 2001 when my cousins and I spent the night partying in Cocomangas. We had a lot of laughs and I felt comfortable being with the people I am familiar with. —**Ina Vargas, 17, UA&P**

October 2002. We had a shoot and on my birthday, the soundman came with Fundador and soft drinks and we drank by the beach. The soundman said, 'Happy birthday! *Di ko alam ano ang halo mo kaya ito*! Coke, Pepsi, 7-Up! *Toma na*!'"—**Alia Vargas, 23, "Game Plan" producer**

When my *barkada* went last year, my friends and I had to carry a friend back to the room since she was so drunk!—**Paul Dee, 18**

The plane we were supposed to ride back to Manila had some technical problem, so me and my friends decided not to take it and were forced to stay in Boracay for another night. It was worth it though because on that extra day, we were able to do para-sailing, jacuzzi, *talipapa* shopping, get an aromatherapy massage and go on a lot of food-tripping.—**Alex Paita, FHM editorial assistant**

Drinking beer on the beach while watching the sun set.—**Chris Costello**

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April 19 RDS Galleria 2:00 p.m.
RDS Ermita 4:00 p.m.
April 27 RDS RP Sta. Rosa 5:00 p.m.

Meet & Greet Garfield
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May 3 RDS Galleria 3:00 p.m.
May 10 RDS Ermita 3:00 p.m.
May 24 RDS RP Sta. Rosa 3:00 p.m.

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Stylish retros

SPORTSWEAR, the swinging '60s, girlie prints and '30s glam get stylishly reinvented in Topshop's 2003 spring/summer collection. Fab pieces come in five fresh updates.

"Freestyle" draws inspiration from the streets of New York and London for its ultra-hip retro sportswear. Bright hues and muted shades of black and grey with flashes of neon used as piping details dominate this collection of vintage jerseys, graffiti, slogans and slinky sweatpants. Drawstring ties, rainbow-colored string vests and lashings of jewelry are added for a sexy modern touch.

Slinkier fabrics in fresh colors of leaf green, fatigue grey, and lemon make up the "Utility" line. Here, drawstring pants are paired with muscle back vests and satin biker jackets for a sexy urban turn. A military-inspired jumpsuit and a pair of killer heels give this look an unexpected twist.

Clean modern silhouettes, on the other hand, are all the rage for "Modette's" stylish update on the swinging '60s. The pieces are fun and functional—capri pants, pencil skirts, cropped biker jackets and sleeveless tanks come in lightweight twills, jersey and satins highlighted by big buttons, exposed zips and Peter Pan collars.

Pretty colors, cute prints and girlie fun, meanwhile, are the main ingredients of the "Tutti Frutti" line. Think floral prints, polka dots, and geometric patterns with mixes of cottons in clean shapes.

"Flapper" revives good 'ol '30s glam with delicate beading, waterfall frills and fringing, art deco styling, creative beadwork, drop waists and layered chiffon with metallic details.

Topshop's spring/summer 2003 collection are now available at its shops at Padre Faura Wing of Robinsons Place Manila, Robinsons Galleria and Shangri-La Plaza Mall.